

## Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Wednesday 12 September 2012

7.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

### Membership

Councillor David Hubber (Chair)  
Councillor the Right Revd Emmanuel  
Oyewole (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Columba Blango  
Councillor Sunil Chopra  
Councillor Rowenna Davis  
Councillor Rosie Shimell  
Councillor Cleo Soanes  
Reverend Nicholas Elder  
Colin Elliott  
Leticia Ojeda  
Lynn Charlton

### Reserves

Councillor James Barber  
Councillor Chris Brown  
Councillor Poddy Clark  
Councillor Darren Merrill  
Councillor Althea Smith

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**Contact** Julie Timbrell on 020 7525 0514 or email: [julie.timbrell@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:julie.timbrell@southwark.gov.uk)

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Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting

**Eleanor Kelly**

Chief Executive

Date: 4 September 2012





# Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Wednesday 12 September 2012

7.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

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Date: 4 September 2012



## **EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LEISURE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of the Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on Tuesday 10 July 2012 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G01C - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

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**PRESENT:** Councillor David Hubber (Chair)  
Councillor the Right Revd Emmanuel Oyewole (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Columba Blango  
Councillor Sunil Chopra  
Councillor Rowenna Davis  
Councillor Rosie Shimell  
Councillor Cleo Soanes  
Colin Elliott  
Leticia Ojeda

### **OTHER MEMBERS**

#### **PRESENT:**

#### **OFFICER**

#### **SUPPORT:**

Kerry Crichlow, Assistant director; strategy and support.  
Jackie Cook, Head of social work improvement and quality assurance  
Deborah Collins, Director of Environment  
Adrian Whittle, Head of Culture, Libraries, Learning and Leisure  
Claire Webb, Head of Policy  
Shelley Burke, Head of Scrutiny  
Julie Timbrell, Project manager

### **1. APOLOGIES**

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Headteacher representative Nick Tildesley

### **2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT**

2.1 There were none.

### 3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

3.1 There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

### 4. MINUTES

#### RESOLVED:

The minutes of last year's Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting held on 23 April 2012 were agreed as an accurate record.

### 5. REVIEW INTO UNIVERSAL FREE HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS

- 5.1 The chair reported that the sub-committee had recently visited Comber Grove school to look at the delivery of Free Healthy School Meals (FHSM). The chair remarked that the school was doing amazing work in quite cramped conditions; furthermore, the children were very confident and charming.
- 5.2 A member remarked that the uptake of school meals was on the lower end. Kerry Crichlow, assistant director of strategy and support, commented that she would welcome the opportunity to give the sub-committee more detailed information on the uptake of meals since the introduction of FHSM.
- 5.3 The chair suggested that a visit to a school in the south of the borough would be good.

#### RESOLVED

Officers will update the draft report circulated internally on the visit to Comber Grove with additional information.

A visit will be scheduled to a primary school in the south of the borough.

### 6. ADULT LEARNING

- 6.1 The chair welcomed the adult education students, stakeholders and officers to the meeting. He noted that the issue had been first raised at Council Assembly and that everybody present would have had an opportunity to read the report submitted by Save Southwark Adult Learning (SSAL) and the officers' reports, which were all circulated in the meeting papers.

- 6.2 The chair invited Dr Vince Brown, SSAL, to introduce their report. Dr Brown started by noting that a new fee structure had been introduced in 2010 and that this added a repeat fee for art and leisure courses. He reported that this meant that for a typical three-hour class taken over 10 weeks, learners who paid the standard fee of £108 had to find £165 to repeat the course. Those entitled to a concessionary fee of £46.50 also had to pay the 'repeat fee' of £165. Dr Brown said that this had deterred people from coming back to do repeat courses.
- 6.3 Dr Brown then referred to two graphs in the report that he said illustrated the effect of repeat fees on cancelled classes. He held up two diagrams from Autumn 2009 and Spring 2011.
- 6.4 Dr Brown said that in his view the repeat fees should be the same as the initial fees, and not rise. He noted that Southwark's fees for classes were reasonable in comparison with other Adult Education providers and it was only the repeat fees that were problematic. He went on to say that the repeat fees had led to a collapse in the service and that SSAL had anticipated this and instead continued to campaign for a business model with low repeat fees and increased investment in marketing. He said this would enable the service to attract a high number of learners who would in turn generate sufficient revenue to sustain the service. Dr Brown praised the excellent quality of the courses, as highlighted by the recent good Ofsted reports. He ended by reiterating that repeat fees needed to go.
- 6.5 The chair invited other members of SSAL and users of the service to comment. A student commented that the whole principle of life long learning and access was at stake, because the courses had become so expensive they were now unaffordable and inaccessible.
- 6.6 The student noted that there had been major investment in Thomas Carlton but it was underused. She explained that participation in adult learning was also about being part of a community of learning, being active and enhancing well-being; she was concerned that this aspect was being lost.
- 6.7 A student commented that adult learning was often perceived as being fluffy and as merely a hobby, however she said that many of the participants were now practising artisans and artists, working professionally. She went on to note that Peckham was now a thriving artistic community and that there was an opportunity for Thomas Carlton to play an active role in this.
- 6.8 There was a comment by a service user that speaking as a disabled person it was not possible to just use another centre.
- 6.9 A student commented that her uncle was a tutor of the Pitmen

Painters and that she thought it important that people had an opportunity to develop. She reported that she left school at 16 and that these classes provided an opportunity for her to return to education and develop her artistic skills.

- 6.10 A student commented that service users loved their courses, but that the repeat fees meant they could now only do one term. She went on to say that you needed to build on a skill and that they were all fans of life long learning, and this meant continuity. She reported that she had wanted to do a course this autumn, but none were available at times that she could do.
- 6.11 A student showed a piece of art and said that he wanted to complete his sculpture, meet people and continue with his studies. Another student said that she had completed CLAiT 1 and 2.
- 6.12 Cllr Rowenna Davis, member of the sub-committee, commented that Thomas Calton was in her ward and that she was a fan of its provision. She explained that as a backbencher she would need to make representations to the cabinet member and that a request for extra money would be very difficult to meet given the current economic situation. She asked if there was a way forward. Dr Vince Brown replied that using the figures supplied by officers he estimated that if courses could attract fourteen students then they would make money, and 10 -12 would cover costs. He said that in his view the way forward was to promote the courses, and this meant, for example, that the website was updated and made more accessible. He reported that other colleges accepted payment online. Students involved in the campaign had offered to assist with going out and helping to spread the word and he had belief that this method would work. Dr Brown said that Southwark took a different course of high repeat fees that had the opposite effect and led to the closure of courses. He ended by saying that City Lit and Morley maintained their courses by investing in marketing, rather than high repeat fees.
- 6.13 A member of the audience said that she was a professor at Goldsmiths and that she had written to Thomas Calton explaining that they could be on a par with Morley College. She said that in her view the repeat fee was not the way forward. She noted that the quality of the teaching was excellent and that the college need to develop a proper recruitment and marketing strategy, and then the repeat fee would become redundant.
- 6.14 A student commented that enrolment on courses was incredibly complex with unnecessary barriers. She went on to say that students had offered to help promote the courses with stalls and to be ambassadors of the services, however they were told that they were not allowed to do this. A member asked who said this and the student responded that this was a tutor. She went on to say that when they had met with Cllr Ward, the former cabinet member for



adult education, they had offered to help with promotion. Students noted that a banner had recently gone up, and this was appreciated, however in their view just a beginning.

- 6.15 A member of the audience commented that the budgets of places such as Morley College and City Lit were not comparable with a place like Thomas Calton and he went on to comment that Thomas Calton was a learning centre not a college. He said that most of the people he represented were users of the ESOL service, which was very good. A student responded that ESOL is another part of the service, not the arts and leisure course, and is unaffected by the repeat fees. He responded that while he supported the campaign to abolish repeat fees Thomas Calton did not have the same capacity as Morley College.
- 6.16 A member of the sub-committee noted that students had reported that the timings of the course did not meet their needs, and wondered if better scheduling might help with increasing course numbers and thus help resolve the difficulties. Another member commented that he had first raised this, and there was a need for to look at delivery of adult education across the system and to work with officers on the financial structuring of the services. He said that he thought there should be an emphasis on the overarching review.
- 6.17 A member commented that the key issue seemed to be the need for more promotion and the repeat fee. She went on to say while Thomas Calton might not be a Morley or City Lit there still appeared to be an awful lot that could be done.
- 6.18 The chair invited officers to introduce themselves and respond to the comments received. Deborah Collins explained that she had recently been appointed as strategic director of environment, taking over from Gill Davies. She explained that she had lead responsibility for delivering this service with delivery being led by Adrian Whittle, head of culture, libraries, learning and leisure and strategy being led by Claire Webb, head of policy.
- 6.19 The strategic director commented that this review had been going on for nearly two years and generated a considerable number of reports and considered arguments, and that she looked forward to scrutiny's recommendations.
- 6.20 The head of culture, libraries, learning and leisure commented that the service had undertaken two workshops with service users, and at the request of the sub-committee, the service had run an additional workshop for students. The officer said that reports on all three workshops had been circulated with the papers.
- 6.21 He went on to draw members' attention to a few financial issues. Firstly, the officer reported that funding came externally from the

Skills Funding Agency, and this subsidised one course for one learner for one year. He explained that this meant if the service got 1000 learners and they took 6000 courses then the service only received funding for 1000 courses. He reported that there was no additional funding for courses given by the council, and that none was available, and this was the crux of the problem.

- 6.22 The head of culture, libraries, learning and leisure clarified that officers did not set fees and charges; this was a decision taken by the lead cabinet member based on officer advice. The officer reported that this decision could be called in by scrutiny.
- 6.23 The head of culture, libraries, learning and leisure reported that Ofsted also inspected the arts and leisure courses. He explained that the service was required to supply a huge amount of data and that he wanted everybody to be assured that this part of the service was rigorously inspected. The officer commented that the service now had 4500 learners, and this had been doubled through improved marketing.
- 6.24 The chair asked officers to clarify whether his understanding was correct that the funding from the Skill Funding Agency was there to subsidise the fees, but was otherwise not restricted. The head of culture, libraries, learning and leisure explained that other colleges had other sources of funding; for example, alumni contributed to funding pots. The chair asked the officer to clarify if Lewisham and Lambeth had extra funding sources and the officer replied that he thought that they did.
- 6.25 Dr Vincent Brown commented that when Dr Hans Meir, from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) gave evidence to the sub-committee he had made it clear that the service held flexibility in its charging decisions. Dr Brown commented that there was an alternative to funding pots and that this was funding. He said that he thought this was a viable alternative for these courses and that this rested on getting more people to do the courses; however the repeat fees undermined this course of action. Dr Brown then read from the Ofsted report, which noted students' aspirations to do more repeat courses.
- 6.26 The head of culture, libraries, learning and leisure said that if the council were to subsidize courses it would cost thousands of pounds. The strategic director of environment commented that the hypothesis was that this could be done; that it was a chicken and egg situation, because of the repeat fees. If the council were to take this route there would be a level of financial risk that the council would need to ensure that it had contingencies available if the business strategy failed to break even. In that event, there would need to be a subsidy. The strategic director also noted that the business approach advocated would need some up front investment in marketing to pump prime.

- 6.27 Claire Webb, head of policy, spoke about the wider vision she was developing. This would be looking at learning for young people and adults, and both courses for skills and employment. Corporate strategy were scoping the review now and when this was completed, she would bring it to the sub-committee.
- 6.28 The chair asked the head of culture, libraries, learning and leisure when the cabinet member would be taking her decision on fees and charges for adult learning, and he replied that this would happen in December or January. The chair requested that she take into account the discussions that had taken place in the scrutiny sub-committee. A member suggested recommending that the service consider underwriting the service so that it could become self-sustaining, and in any event, the website should be updated.
- 6.29 Dr Brown commented that unless repeat fees were abolished the service would collapse, and requested that the sub-committee make this recommendation to the Leader, Councillor Peter John. The chair emphasised that scrutiny was not a decision making body and could only make suggestions and recommendations to the cabinet member. He said that the sub-committee was sympathetic to SSAL's campaign and would ask the cabinet member to take into account all the submissions and discussions that had taken place at the sub-committee. Dr Brown announced that he would lobby Cllr Claire Hickson, cabinet member for adult learning, and explain that SSAL had the full sympathy of the sub-committee.

## **RESOLVED**

The cabinet member will be given a record of the committee's submissions discussions and asked to take these into account when making the decision on fees and charges for Adult Learning.

The minutes of the relevant scrutiny committees will be consulted to ascertain if officers made any statements concerning conditions attached to SFA funding and use of the Thomas Calton building, and about consultation with voluntary groups delivering services at the centre.

## **7. DOMESTIC ABUSE - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

- 7.1 The chair invited Jackie Cook, head of social work improvement and quality assurance, to present. The officer explained that the initiative was jointly commissioned by the Safer Southwark Partnership, and worked on research and promoting good practice. A scrutiny review on Domestic Abuse was being produced by the Housing, Environment, and Transport & Community Safety

Scrutiny Sub-Committee and was nearing completion.

- 7.2 The officer referred to the presentation and explained that domestic abuse was defined as, "any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality". The officer explained that the main characteristic of domestic violence was that the behaviour was intentional and calculated to exercise power and control within a relationship.
- 7.3 The officer explained that the majority of perpetrators were male and heterosexual. Domestic abuse accounted for approximately 6.5 - 7% of all recorded crime in Southwark. About 20% of recorded crime in Southwark was classified as violence against the person. One in every four of these violent crimes was linked to domestic abuse. Research suggested that a victim would experience thirty-five incidents until the first report.
- 7.4 In Southwark, 40% of Merlin referrals were domestic abuse related. A Merlin referral takes place from the police to social services. These referrals represented a massive proportion of Southwark Council's overall referrals. 30% of these referrals triggered initial assessments. The council did not have the capacity to look at all the referrals. Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) looked at the most serious cases; there were 254 children and young people that the council was extremely concerned about.
- 7.5 The officer referred to research that indicated that domestic abuse was linked with poor outcomes, and the longer the abuse continued the more this impacted on the children.
- 7.6 The officer spoke about the people involved and explained that the majority of perpetrators were men, and where men were victims, or women were perpetrators, this was usually in a homosexual relationship. There were only usually about two incidents a year of women acting as perpetrators in heterosexual relationships. African Caribbeans were over represented in recent Southwark figures as both victims and perpetrators of abuse. However the new domestic abuse service was carrying out careful monitoring and would eventually give the council a more precise measure of this.
- 7.7 Research indicated that around 52% of children on child protection plans had experienced domestic abuse. Domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental ill health were the 'toxic trio' and the three key factors most likely to feature in child deaths and serious injuries. Domestic abuse was the single most common factor.
- 7.8 The Safer Southwark Partnership, the local community safety

partnership, had a duty to tackle crime and disorder in the local area, including domestic violence (Crime and Disorder Act 1998).

- 7.9 The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act and the Children's Act (2004) placed a duty of care on local authorities to provide services to victims of domestic abuse, including children. Duties had recently increased to include a duty to conduct domestic violence homicide reviews. The officer commented that they were doing a review now of a death and the woman involved was highly mobile - moving every three months. The officer explained that the Housing Act 1996 allowed local authorities to prevent domestic violence in the context of housing management functions and it also placed duties on the council which could be extremely expensive for councils.
- 7.10 The officer outlined the new service. Southwark Advocacy and Support Services (SASS) – run by Solace Women's Aid provides the Domestic Abuse service from April 1 2012. This included:
- A borough wide service, with a new centre for domestic violence and a single point of entry – one phone number, one email
  - 24/7 access to the service
  - Improved response time to high risk victims
  - Improved outcomes in reducing victimisation and risk
  - A perpetrator programme
  - Specialist support programmes for children and young people
  - Other benefits including a service user forum and a volunteer programme
- 7.11 The chair asked the officer if children could use the telephone service. The head of social work improvement and quality assurance responded that young people aged 16 – 18 might well use the service and that there was growing concern about violence in relationships between young people.
- 7.12 Shelley Burke, head of scrutiny, commented that work was done with mothers and the officer explained that this was to get knowledge from survivors to improve outcomes. The officer explained that around 10% of the budget went on this. She went on to explain that there was a perpetrator programme involving fathers in child protection plans more effectively.
- 7.13 The officer explained that that they were seeking champions from each department to champion the service and monitoring the

outcomes monthly. She reported that initially they had received a high number of referrals but this appeared to be calming down a little. The project was aiming to improve the quality of MARAC decision making and improve the Merlin referral and assessment process. The service was aiming to refer perpetrators to programmes.

- 7.14 The officer referred to two programmes started through successful bidding for Daphne funding: Safe Healthy and Equal Relationships (SHER) and the Hedgehogs Project. The projects supported young people in preventing domestic/dating abuse and sexual exploitation respectively. The Hedgehogs Project has had a very positive evaluation and the service intended to roll this out.
- 7.15 The officer said that the Domestic Abuse programme was also working on the 'troubled families' initiative' which was particularly aimed at families not in work. Eric Pickles had reported that 'troubled families' cost the tax payer 9 billion pounds a year. There was also a small grant to support work with Youth Clubs to raise awareness around domestic abuse.
- 7.16 The chair invited members to ask questions. A member asked about early intervention and the officer responded that the service worked with teenagers to encourage good relationships. She commented that 20% of all women experience abuse and that the service worked with those cases that were referred to social workers or the police.
- 7.17 A member asked if the service was working with faith groups and commented that economic pressures were raising the likelihood of violence. The officer responded that the initiative was looking to involve more faith community representatives in the working group.
- 7.18 A member noted that raising awareness was very important, particularly of the psychological impact within ethnic minority communities, as domestic abuse could be a hidden problem inside the home. The officer commented that domestic abuse was spread evenly, however some groups were particularly vulnerable, for example women who had no leave to remain in the country.
- 7.19 The officer was asked if the service tracked children removed from school and he was assured that they did, and that there was an active group looking at this. The vast majority were tracked down, however around 10% were not and these were put on a central schools' list.
- 7.20 A member requested that the officer return to the slide with the definition of domestic abuse. He said that he accepted that this was a Home Office definition but asked for a clarification of the term "economic abuse". The head of social work improvement and quality assurance explained this was about the withholding of

money and one of the reasons child benefit was paid to women.

- 7.21 The member went on to comment that while he thought some 'outbursts' could be calculated, did the officer agree that sometimes an outburst might be an angry response to provocation? Another member said that she would certainly challenge that. The officer responded that evidence, such as the DVIP research, indicated that people did have control over their actions; for example, the vast majority of domestic abuse incidents occurred in the home, and this suggested that the perpetrator had a degree of control. The member commented that some perpetrators might not be able to prevent themselves – it might be a spur of the moment reaction as part of a row between a couple; for example a slap or similar. He then asked how the officer would distinguish between domestic violence and bullying and asked if the term bullying might be better applied in some cases. The officer responded that domestic abuse was about power and reminded the sub-committee of the different types of abuse: physical, economic, emotional, financial and psychological.
- 7.22 The member went on to ask about violence that happened outside the home. Another member commented that she did not think it mattered if the violence was a one off issue or a pattern of abuse; if someone is not in control they should be in a mental institution. She felt that the member should apologise to the officer.
- 7.23 The member then said that she wanted to pose a question about the likelihood of childhood victims becoming perpetrators. The officer said that there was no firm evidence of a correlation. There was some research and anecdotal evidence that if there was violence in the family then there was more likelihood of a victim becoming a perpetrator, however it could also have the opposite effect.
- 7.24 A member of the public said that he had not expected to hear such comments in a council meeting. He added that if abuse was defined like this was then it went on in every home. He then said that on the estate where he worked, economic power was shifting to women and this could make men angry
- 7.25 A member asked whether the Safer Southwark Partnership put out literature advising victims on how to spot the signs of possible domestic abuse and avoid it and giving step-by-step instructions to take action.
- 7.26 The officer said it was not that simple. She also noted that women in vulnerable situations were most likely to be abused and that it was when women decided to seek help that they were most at risk and therefore most in need of support .
- 7.27 The chair thanked the head of social work improvement and quality

assurance for her presentation and invited her to return in six months time.

## **RESOLVED**

There will be an update on Domestic Abuse in 6 months. The scrutiny report on Domestic Abuse, produced by the Housing, Environment, Transport & Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee, will be circulated, alongside the cabinet response.

## **8. WORK PLAN**

- 8.1 The chair opened the discussion on the work plan by recommending that the sub committee continue the practice of annually interviewing the independent chair of the children's safeguarding board. He reported that he had recently spoken with Ofsted as part of the inspection of Southwark safeguarding. Kerry Crichlow, Assistant Director Strategy & Support, informed the committee that the council has received back the results of the inspection, which had been good, with Southwark was graded as having an outstanding 'capacity for improvement'.
- 8.2 Sub committee members indicated that cabinet member interviews and attendance to cover aspects of their portfolios should take place, and that March would be a good time for the interview of Cllr Dora Dixon-Fyle, cabinet lead for Children's Services.
- 8.3 The chair commented that it would be useful to continue to look at families in difficulty and facing challenging situations; recent reviews had focused on this theme and the CSV pilot programme is particularly relevant to this area.
- 8.4 The sub committee discussed undertaking a review on the role of local authorities in education. The chair commented that he had recently read an excellent report on this subject and requested a copy be circulated to the sub committee.
- 8.5 Members indicated that a review on bullying , considering both school and council policy in supporting vulnerable children and reducing abusive and poor peer relations would be worthwhile.
- 8.6 A member indicated that a report on the Olympic legacy would be useful.
- 8.7 Swimming pools in Southwark and their efficient provision was raised by a member and it was agreed that a report would be requested on this.
- 8.8 A member commented that young people from Southwark Youth Council and Speaker Box have raised concerns about the



transition from school into training and employment and that a report on this would be helpful.

- 8.9 The chair thanked the sub - committee for their contributions and invited members to make any further suggestions for review items via email.
- 8.10 A member of the public, Mr Junior McDonald, asked the chair if he could make a comment about the previous item on Adult Education, as he had been unable to attend earlier in the evening. The chair invited him to comment and Mr McDonald explained that he was from CYPA and represented voluntary organisations that delivered services from Thomas Calton centre. He went on to say that he thought that council officers had wrongly stated at previous scrutiny committee meetings that the £750,000 received from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) had a condition attached which stated that if adult services did not have 100% use of Thomas Calton then these funds would need to be repaid. He also stated that he thought council officers had suggested at a scrutiny meeting that all voluntary sector organisations at Thomas Calton had been consulted prior to refurbishment plans.
- 8.11 He said that he believed that these statements had been made, and they were inaccurate. In particular he said that it would have been inaccurate for officers to state that there were conditions attached to the grant funding by SFA. He alleged that because of this inaccurate information many voluntary organisations had been displaced from the centre.
- 8.12 The senior legal officer, Sarah Feasey, advised the chair, on behalf of the Monitoring Officer, that there are legal proceedings between the CYPA and the council in relation to Thomas Calton centre. She advised that it would therefore not be appropriate for the the sub-committee to consider matters which are before the court. Mr McDonald responded by stating that although a Section 25 Notice is the subject of litigation the issue of inaccurate submissions made to this committee is something which should be addressed by this committee.
- 8.13 The chair requested that the minutes of the relevant scrutiny committees be consulted to ascertain if officers had indeed made these statements. [This resolution is recorded under the relevant Adult Education item].

## **RESOLVED**

### **Work Programme 2012/13**

#### **Set piece interviews**

Safeguarding – annual report and interview of Independent chair - April

**Cabinet member interviews:**

Cllr Veronica Ward: Olympics and Leisure – 12 September

Cllr Dora Dixon-Fyle: Children – 12 March

**Cabinet member invited to participate:**

Cllr Claire Hickson: 26 November

- Adult Education (invite officers, SSAL, and other service users).
- Economic development & young people, see below presentation and report request.\*

**Regular items**

Rotherhithe School and Southwark Free Schools – update reports each meeting.

Twice yearly attendance at 26 November and 12 March by Southwark Youth Council & Speakerbox, alongside review of Children's and Young People's Plan (CYPP)  
(Coinciding with cabinet members' attendance/ interviews with Cllr Hickson and Cllr Dixon-Fyle).

Monitoring of cabinet members reports in response to the following reviews: Obesity and Sports Provision (February), and Support for parents and carers of disabled children and young people (November).

**Presentations and reports**

Olympics - measuring the impact (September).

Swimming pools - is our provision efficient and meeting community needs (September).

\*The work of the council in supporting young people transition from school to collage and work. How do we promote and support young people to access jobs, training and work qualifications (November)

Supporting parents in challenging situations: update report on the work being done by CSV to support parents (January)

Learning and improvement in local safeguarding  
Safeguarding report (September).

Update on Domestic Abuse including cabinet response to the scrutiny report produced by Housing, Environment, Transport & Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee (January).

## **Reviews**

1. Review of universal Free Healthy School Meals
2. Bullying - school and council policy in supporting vulnerable children and reducing abusive and poor peer relations.

Request introductory report form officers (September)

3. The council's role with maintained, academy and free schools - exploring what our governance and influencing levers are in a changing context, and how the council can promote good performance, and tackle poor performance.

Request introductory report form officers (November)

### **9. UPDATE REPORT ON ROTHERHITHE SCHOOL AND SOUTHWARK FREE SCHOOL**

- 9.1 The chair noted the report on Rotherhithe School and Southwark Free School and commented that the situation had not changed significantly since the last report. Kerry Crichlow, Assistant Director Strategy & Support, assured the sub committee that progress is being made, at a slow and measured pace.

#### **RESOLVED**

The sub-committee will continue to receive regular updates.

### **10. CABINET RESPONSE TO THE REVIEW OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY AND SPORTS PROVISION**

- 10.1 The chair reported that he had attended the last cabinet meeting where a response had been tabled to the scrutiny review report on childhood obesity and sports provision. He commented that this had been encouraging and the recommendations had been accepted on the whole.

#### **RESOLVED**

The sub committee resolved to monitor the implementation of the report's recommendations and requested an update report in 6 months time from officers.

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>What is the swimming pool provision for the communities in our borough?</b>
<b>Prepared for</b>	<b>Education Children’s Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee</b>
<b>Prepared By</b>	<b>Deborah Collins, Strategic Director Environment &amp; Leisure</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>September 2012</b>

**Background**

- 1.1 Southwark has four centres with pool facilities within its leisure portfolio. The ages of the facilities vary from 2 Victorian bath houses pools (Camberwell and Dulwich) to the most recently built facility (1998)in Peckham.
- 1.2 Camberwell Leisure Centre – 1 x 25m pool and 1 x learner pool.  
Dulwich Leisure Centre – 1 25m pool  
Peckham Pulse – 1 x 25m pool and 1 x hydrotherapy pool.  
Seven Islands Leisure Centre – 1 x 33m pool.
- 1.3 Until recent years the majority of the facilities had begun to reach the end of their serviceable life and were in major need of investment. Back in 2007 the Council agreed £12.3m of capital investment to be spent on the borough’s leisure facilities.

**Leisure Investment to date**

- 2.1 Over the past 3 years there has been considerable investment in the borough’s leisure centres which included the pools at Dulwich and Camberwell. The majority of the investment was funded from the council’s own capital fund.

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Capital funding (£)</b>	<b>External funding sourced (£)</b>	<b>Total project budget (£)</b>
Surrey Docks Watersports Centre	2.4m	0	2.4m
Dulwich Leisure Centre	6.5m	0	6.5m
Camberwell Leisure Centre Ph 1+2	3.1m	2.3m	5.4m
Camberwell Leisure Centre Ph 3	500k	600k	1.1m
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12.5m</b>	<b>2.9m</b>	<b>15.4m</b>

- 2.2 Dulwich Leisure Centre - £6.5m total capital investment – Completed June 2011
  - Reconfiguration of pool tank to create standard 25m pool, with depth at deep end reduced to permit wider usage across entire length of pool
  - Stepped access into the pool (instead of vertical ladders at the pool edge) to allow those with mobility issues, or parents carrying small children to enter the pool without assistance
  - Poolside hoist to allow direct transfer of users from accessible changing rooms to the water

- Complete retiling of pool tank and hall to provide a slip resistant and hard-wearing finish
- New pool plant to deliver improved filtration and water clarity, and controlled air temperatures
- Improved thermal performance of the Victorian building fabric to reduce energy loss
- Motorised pool cover to minimise energy losses during non-operational periods
- Complete reconfiguration of the pool changing environments, including a family change and accessible changing area. The accessible changing and shower rooms feature ceiling-mounted hoist systems to allow the safe and convenient transfer of pool users; dedicated increased-width, contrasting-colour lockers with Braille numbering; and lowered vanity counters for wheelchair users.
- Addition of a pool viewing area.

2.3 Camberwell Leisure Centre - centre wide anticipated spend of £6.5m – Due to be fully completed Dec 2012

- Reconfiguration of pool tank to create standard 25m main pool, and 10m learner pool
- Stepped access into both the main and learner pools (instead of vertical ladders at the pool edge) to allow those with mobility issues, or parents carrying small children to enter the pool without assistance
- Poolside hoist to allow direct transfer of users from accessible changing rooms to the water
- Complete retiling of pool tank and hall to provide a slip resistant and hard-wearing finish
- New pool plant to deliver improved filtration and water clarity, and controlled air temperatures
- Improved thermal performance of the Victorian building fabric to reduce energy loss
- Complete reconfiguration of the pool changing environments, including a family change and accessible changing area. The accessible changing and shower rooms feature ceiling-mounted hoist systems to allow the safe and convenient transfer of pool users; dedicated increased-width, contrasting-colour lockers with Braille numbering; and lowered vanity counters for wheelchair users.
- Full perimeter viewing balcony; with lift access from reception

### **Planned leisure Investment**

- 3.1 Seven Islands Leisure Centre – £8m has been set aside in the Council Capital fund for the redevelopment of Seven Islands leisure Centre. The aim is to develop the centre to bring it in line with the quality of Camberwell and Dulwich. The consultation process is due to begin in Dec 2012 and it is planned for the project to be completed some time in 2015. Detailed plans for the centre are yet to be drawn up.
- 3.2 Elephant and Castle Leisure Centre – The Elephant and Castle Leisure Centre opened in the late 1960s with a six court sports hall, gym, two studios, two squash courts, bar and lounge area, and a swimming pool complete with a wave machine. In 1997 the pool was closed due to unsafe roof construction and did not reopen. By 2012 the centre reached the end of its serviceable life and was no longer fit for purpose.
- 3.3 In 2010 Southwark Council agreed to enter into a regeneration agreement with Lend Lease paving the way for a historic £1.5bn regeneration of the Elephant and Castle. The leisure centre did not form part of the main agreement, which led the council to explore the

options for providing a new leisure centre, including consultation with local residents, users and stakeholders about what they would like to see in a new facility if developed.

3.4 In November 2010 the cabinet gave approval to progress with the design of a new leisure facility. The design process has now reached stage two and a planning application was submitted on August 2012. The design currently includes

- Six lane 25m swimming pool
- Learner pool

3.5 The new leisure £20m centre will continue the Council's drive to provide excellent facilities for its residents and improve the health of the borough. At 5pm on Tuesday 5 June 2012, after almost 40 years of providing fitness facilities, the centre closed to the public. Demolition is expected later this year and the plan is to open the new centre mid 2014. The addition of two new pools in this part of the borough will complete an unprecedented investment and improvements to the Council's leisure facilities particularly it's pools.

### **Swimming participation**

4.1 Swimming participation has increased significantly over the last three and a half years. As Camberwell and Dulwich were undergoing re-developments in 2009/10 and 2010/11 overall usage was down for those years. Even taking that into consideration it is obvious that since the quality of facilities has improved there has been an upsurge in swimming pool usage in the borough which looks to be continuing in 2012/13. Alongside the redevelopment of the pools Fusion (Council's leisure management provider) continue to develop their pool programme and swim school programme.

#### **Wet Side Participation Figures 2009/10 to Present**

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13 to date
Camberwell	34,947	8,386	100,615	45,257
Dulwich	n/a	28,861	115,653	44,009
Peckham Pulse	114,422	134,541	118,247	49,700
Seven Islands	54,994	45,497	63,013	18,340
<b>Total</b>	<b>204,363</b>	<b>217,285</b>	<b>397,528</b>	<b>157,306</b>

### **Development of swimming programme**

#### **5.1 Swimming**

There has been an increased focus on swimming development in the borough over the last year. We have been working closely with Fusion to ensure provision is wide ranging and of a high standard and to create better links with clubs. Through the 'legacy makers' programme, we have been supporting Southwark Aquatics (competitive swimming club based at Seven Islands Leisure Centre) in a range of club development exercises including funding, training and management. Plans are to expand the club to also operate from Camberwell in January 2013 so there will be club opportunities in both the north and south of the borough.

5.2 We also host an annual London Youth Games trial at JAGS pool, which is open to all swimmers living or going to school in the borough and encourage disability swimming involvement. We also continue to build great links with the Amateur Swimming Association who are the national governing board for swimming and work with them to deliver their whole sport plan.

### 5.3 Waterpolo

Waterpolo is at a developmental stage within the borough; only a few public schools currently play the sport and there are no known clubs operating. For the London Youth Games, Waterpolo is a development sport and Team Southwark have entered a team for the last two years, through close work with Dulwich College. Players are recruited from the school itself, and girls from the surrounding public schools. The Southwark team has narrowly lost in the final for the last two years, so we hope to challenge for the title again in 2013. Fusion and the Council are currently looking at the pool programme to see how waterpolo can be introduced to the general activity offer.

### 5.4 Aquathlon/Triathlon

Triathlon is at a developmental stage within the borough, due to the Olympic success of the Brownlee brothers it has now come more to the forefront of grassroots sports development. For the London Youth Games we have worked in partnership with England Triathlon and Lambeth Council to create a borough team. Trials and training have taken place at Brockwell lido as it is a suitable venue, but we hope to bring this into our borough for the 2013 Games. Fusion are currently reviewing the feasibility of open water swimming at Surrey Docks and other swimming disciplines with the aim of developing training opportunities for tri-athletes in the borough. Team Southwark performed well at the 2012 Games and there seems to be more of an interest in the sport now which the Council aims to maximise on.

### 5.5 Sub Aqua

Bermondsey Sub Aqua Club (based at Seven Islands Leisure Centre, SILC) have also been assisted in their development by promoting the club to increase general participation and bringing them together with UCL for a Sportivate bid to encourage university student participation.

### 5.6 Swim School

In 2010, there were 1,620 pupils enrolled on the Southwark swim school programme. Extensive marketing and development coupled with the new pool facilities at Dulwich and Camberwell have resulted in a further 1090 enrolments and there are now 2,710 children learning to swim on the programme.

5.7 ASA and MEND Swim Active programme – Fusion received funding from MEND to run a six week 'learn to swim' programme in February 2012. Disabled sessions were delivered at SILC and a women's only session at Peckham. We have 9 regular swimmers at SILC and an average of 20 per week at Peckham (for a Muslim women's group).

### 5.8 Swimming for older adults

In recent years Fusion have programmed in 8 Silver (60+) swimming sessions per week (two at each of the four sites with swimming pools) as part of the comprehensive Silver Active programme. The Silver Active programme allows older adults to take part in physical activity at extremely low prices. Older adults can swim at any time for 60p

however the 'Silver' sessions are designated times when the pool is for use by older adults only.

#### 5.9 Future programme development

- Review - Fusion are currently undertaking a complete review of the Southwark Swimming pools programme to see how our facilities can be maximised in terms of participation, development and learning health and fun. The full introduction of the developments will be across the full year 2013/14.
- Development - The aim is to create greater opportunities for pathways and developments of the swimming programme passed Swim School basic development.
- Marketing - A review of the branding of the sessions as part of a new marketing and communications campaign will be completed.
- Swim School – a review is to be completed on the capacity and delivery opportunities for swim school at all of the facilities.

#### Comparison with neighbouring authorities

6.1 Data comparing provision in neighbouring authorities is set out below.

	<b>Population</b>	<b>Centres with pools</b>	<b>Investment</b>	<b>Cost of swim</b>
<b>Southwark</b>	274,400	4 (1)	£15.4m (£28m)	General - £4.30 60+ - 60p U16 – 60p
<b>Lambeth</b>	272,000	3 (1)		General - £4.00 60+ - £1.80 U16 – £1
<b>Lewisham</b>	275,900	5 (1)	£36.5m	General - £3.50 60+ - Free U16 – £1.65
<b>Croydon</b>	363,400	4 (1)		General - £3.70 60+ - Free U16 – 70p

( ) = planned/in progress

6.2 It should be noted that although Southwark is the most expensive borough in terms of the general ticket price, very few people end up paying this. The majority of customers are either direct debit (pay monthly members) or 'Leisure Access' Card (discount card) members. The same ticket with a 'Leisure Access' card costs only £2.40.

6.3 Southwark has kept the older adult and under 16 swim ticket price the same for the past 3 years ensuring that price does not become a barrier to taking part in physical activity and the benefits that can bring to a persons wellbeing.



<b>Item No:</b>	<b>Classification</b> OPEN	<b>Date:</b> 12 September 2012	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Education, Children's Services & Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee
<b>Report Title:</b>		Preparing for the scrutiny interview	
<b>Ward(s) or Group affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Scrutiny project manager	

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Councillor Veronica Ward, Cabinet member for culture, leisure, sport, the Olympics and Regeneration (South), annual interview with the Education, Children's Services & Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee scrutiny sub committee is scheduled for 12 September 2012.
2. This will be on all aspects of the cabinet leads portfolio, with the exception of regeneration (south), as OSC will conduct an interview on this area separately.
3. Members of the committee have chosen six themes to structure the interview around:
  - a. What is the swimming pool provision for the communities in our borough?
  - b. Given the contributions made by Southwark residents, both in financial terms and in their acceptance of inconvenience, do you believe that Southwark has benefited from the 2012 Olympics as much as it could or should have?
  - c. What do you think will be Southwark's lasting legacy from the 2012 Olympics?
  - d. Do you have any policies in mind for keeping up the momentum of enthusiasm for sport and physical activity particularly amongst young people in Southwark
  - e. Are you satisfied with the current operation of Surrey Docks Watersports Centre?
  - f. Could you give the sub-committee an update of progress on the various recommendations made in respect of library services by the former Regeneration scrutiny sub-committee?

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 12 September 2012	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Free Healthy School Meals – Schools survey feedback	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Assistant Director Strategy and Support, Children's Services	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. To note the feedback on free health school meals from the survey of parents of primary school children carried out during the summer term 2012.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The following are views taken from discussions either one to one or by groups of parents.

### Summary of parents' views

3. The children like the food and are eating better at home. Children meet teachers from other classes and learn social skills when they experience eating together.
4. The application process had been good and handled well through the school which supported them with completing forms etc.
5. The school menu is presented on a colourful, attractive notice board in the playground for children, staff and parents to see. Menus are also sent to parents.
6. Children are rewarded with a sticker when they have eaten well which parent sees.
7. It has been important in helping to save money as one parent spoken to is on one wage supporting three children.
8. The menu is good, children enjoy the food and if there is a specific issue the school is informed. One parent couldn't comment as they had not tasted the menu. One of the schools the parents said that they invite parents of children starting in reception to have a school lunch, however this is not offered to parents of children in other year groups.
9. Children at another school are learning to grow food and understand where it comes from, year 2 grow fruit and vegetables, messages around healthy living are given throughout the whole school- walking to school and sports are encouraged.
10. It is good for children to have a hot meal especially during the winter term.
11. Meals focused the children and helped their learning.

12. Brilliant idea to have cultural food such as jerk chicken, parents said that children tried different foods that were from other cultures and this helps children to have respect for others.
13. 2 parents feel that the children's dietary requirements are met including those with religious requirements. 1 parent said sometimes the meals look slightly mismatched to what they would usually eat at home e.g. chicken curry with salad
14. One parent said their child had started to be less fussy about food at home particularly vegetables.
15. Another parent with two children, (one in reception and one in year 1) noticed how their older child was eating better at home, previously they wanted a packed lunch like their friends, however this is no longer an issue as they all have a school dinner.
16. All the parents at one school who were spoken to, said their child enjoyed the school lunches. One parent no longer needs to cook separate dinners at home as children were less fussy about food.
17. The view from all parents at one school who were spoken to, was that their children do eat well at home, but they agreed that their children had had the opportunity to try different foods by having school meals.
18. When asked about the children's view of the school meals and whether it had changed their children's eating habits at home, the parents said the children liked the meals at school, one had asked their parent for more salad.
19. When asked about any suggestions for improving the process, the only comment was whether it could be rolled out to years 5 & 6 sooner.

#### AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Kerry Crichlow, Assistant Director Strategy and Support, Children's Services	
<b>Report Author</b>	Colin Gale, Free Healthy School Meals Project Lead	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	31 August 2012	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Director of Legal Services	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Scrutiny Team</b>	4 September 2012	



## Scrutiny review proposal

**1 What is the review?**

Bullying - school and council policy in supporting vulnerable children and reducing abusive and poor peer relations.

**2 What outcomes could realistically be achieved? Which agency does the review seek to influence?**

**3 When should the review be carried out/completed? i.e. does the review need to take place before/after a certain time?**

**4 What format would suit this review? (e.g. full investigation, Q&A with cabinet member/partners, public meeting, one-off session)**

**5 What are some of the key issues that you would like the review to look at?**

**6 Who would you like to receive evidence and advice from during the review?**

**7 Any suggestions for background information? Are you aware of any best practice on this topic?**

Bullying of children and young people:  
How is Southwark tackling it?  
Report of the children's services and education scrutiny sub-committee  
March 2007

**8 What approaches could be useful for gathering evidence? What can be done outside committee meetings?**

e.g. verbal or written submissions, site visits, mystery-shopping, service observation, meeting with stakeholders, survey, consultation event



# **Bullying of children and young people:**

## **How is Southwark tackling it?**

Report of the children's services and education  
scrutiny sub-committee

March 2007



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## **Foreword**

I think that I speak for all members of the sub-committee in thanking everyone involved for their frankness and openness whilst giving evidence to assist us in identifying the key areas for progress identified in this report.

I would especially like to thank the school councils who spoke to us in a very positive and knowledgeable way and who made the school visits such an enjoyable experience for all of the sub-committee members.

The overall picture is actually quite a reassuring one and we hope that the five key recommendations within this report, if implemented, will add significantly in the development of policy, procedures and practice that can further identify and tackle bullying and positively build upon the great deal of good practice that is already evident in Southwark.

**Councillor John Friary**  
Chair



## Executive summary

The 2006/07 children's services and education scrutiny committee decided to review the bullying of children and young people in Southwark. We were interested in finding out the extent that bullying is seen as a problem and what is being done to combat it.

Evidence was collected by talking to approximately 100 children and young people on school councils in the borough, teachers, hearing from the organisation 'Beatbullying', sending a questionnaire to schools about their anti-bullying policies and considering council data and officer information.

Our review confirms that many children and young people seem to have seen or experienced some level of bullying and that there is fear of bullying even amongst those who have not direct experience of being bullying. Bullying is not endemic, but it does occur.

Many schools have excellent initiatives in place to help combat bullying within the school environment, and students generally believe that schools take bullying seriously. The council is also going beyond its statutory requirements to provide support to schools. The next step is to share examples of effective initiatives across Southwark so we can all learn from it.

Safety outside school - particularly on journeys to and from school - is a serious concern of children and young people, and one that our sub-committee shares. It is an issue which no one agency can tackle on its own.

Our five recommendations to the executive are:

1. That a council officer be identified and tasked with the responsibility of coordinating termly meetings between police beat officers, safer neighbourhood teams, secondary schools and bus and train operators to share information and coordinate initiatives aimed at ensuring that the journey to and from school is safe.
2. The council takes active steps to facilitate the sharing of information about bullying strategies amongst schools and other key agencies. This should include:
  - organising a two yearly bullying conference
  - collating school anti-bullying policies and circulating good practice examples to head teachers and chairs of governors as an aid to other schools when reviewing their anti-bullying policies
  - becoming involved with the Anti-Bullying Alliance.
3. The council coordinates a mediation service on a trial basis to resolve any disputes between parents and schools, including disputes that relate to incidents of bullying. We think that schools should pay for this service on a case-by-case basis, but the council should organise the provision.
4. Officers look into whether schools want more training around bullying. If so, the LEA should support this either by actively promoting the council and Southwark-wide services available, or by directly organising training days.

5. That executive tasks an officer to look into what extent gambling is a problem amongst children and young people in Southwark.

Our sub-committee can only make recommendations to the council's executive about areas in which the council may make improvements. We are hopeful that schools in the borough will also take on board the key points that are pertinent to them.

## Introduction

In 2006/07 the children's services and education scrutiny sub-committee decided to review the bullying of children and young people in Southwark.

The issue of bullying is high on the national agenda – both the Education and Skills Select Committee and the Children's Commissioner are currently looking into the issue. A key driver appears to be recognition that bullying should not be treated as an inevitable part of growing up and that action can be taken to reduce the incidence of it occurring.

Children and young people in Southwark schools had already told the council that they experience bullying. In 2006, one-third of primary and secondary students who responded to the council's 'Pupil Voice' survey said that they had been bullied by other children at school that year. Many children reported that they did not feel safe on their journey to and from school, or outside the school environment generally.

Being bullied can, for example, lead to poor levels of achievement at school, truancy, social withdrawal, poor self-esteem, anxiety, depression or even suicide. Children who bully are at greater risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour or more serious criminal activities<sup>1</sup>.

The sub-committee therefore decided to talk to children and young people and teachers about bullying to find out to what extent bullying is a problem and what is being done to combat bullying. Our findings are presented in this report.

Everyone we spoke to agreed that bullying does occur in Southwark, but the evidence we received also shows that there are excellent strategies and initiatives within our borough and that schools aim to combat bullying and create an environment where children feel safe. Many of these initiatives are new, and will take time to filter through, but the movement is in the right direction.

However, there are also areas that need further consideration by the council and schools alike. We have identified the action that we feel should be taken in section seven of this report.

### What is bullying?

There are a series of definitions of bullying used in the literature. Most definitions include the following features:

- aggression
- intentional hurtfulness
- abuse of power
- repetition

The sub-committee adopted as a working definition the definition used in the Office of the Children's Commissioner's report *Bullying Today: a report by the office of the children's commissioner, with recommendations and links to practitioner tools*:

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<sup>1</sup> University of Edinburgh website: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/research/hss/crime.html>

Bullying involves a desire to hurt + hurtful action + (typically) repetition + an unjust use of power + evident enjoyment by the aggressor and generally a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim.

We stress the elements of abuse of power and repetition. It would be wrong to think that every playground argument is fairly described as bullying.

### **Aims of the review**

Our aims were:

1. To obtain a clear picture of the level of bullying across Southwark, and to review what the council is doing to reduce this
2. To find out whether there are examples of good practice in Southwark which have positively impacted on the levels of bullying and which should be promoted
3. To make recommendations to the executive in the light of our findings.

### **Method of review**

The review took place between October 2006 and February 2007. We collected evidence in the following ways:

- formal evidence at our meetings on October 11 2006, December 5 2006 and February 5 2007
- visits to four primary and two secondary schools in the borough to talk to the school councils and to their teachers – where we spoke to approximately 100 children and young people<sup>2</sup>
- responses a to questionnaire sent to all maintained education settings in the borough in November 2006 (the summary of responses is attached at Appendix A)
- drawing on relevant literature, including:
  - *“Bullying: effective action in secondary schools”*, Ofsted, 2003
  - *“Bullying in schools in England: a review of the complaints system and a discussion of options for change”*, Office of the Children’s Commissioner, November 2006
  - *“Bullying today: a report by the office of the children’s commissioner, with recommendations and links to practitioner tools”*, Office of the Children’s Commissioner, November 2006

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<sup>2</sup> Notes from the visits to schools can be seen at:  
[www.southwark.gov.uk/Uploads/FILE\\_26955.pdf](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/Uploads/FILE_26955.pdf)

- attending a Westminster briefing organised by the House Magazine: *Zero tolerance: tackling indiscipline and bullying in schools*, held on November 9 2007.

### **Our sub-committee**

Members of the sub-committee during the review were:

- Councillor John Friary (Chair)
- Councillor Nick Vineall (Vice-Chair)
- Councillor Jonathan Mitchell
- Councillor Adele Morris
- Councillor Sandra Rhule
- Councillor Bob Skelly
- Councillor Veronica Ward
- Reverend Nicholas Elder
- Ms Ann Marie Eastwood
- Mr Alie Kallon
- Ms Josie Spanswick

## 1. Level of bullying in Southwark

Our information about bullying in Southwark came from two main sources – council survey data and our visits to schools in the borough.

We found the Pupil Voice data particularly useful. This is a questionnaire, available to all maintained schools, which is filled in by pupils on an anonymous basis. We think that this method of annual survey (which began in 2005) is an extremely useful source of information and will in the future become an important tool for analysing changes in the experience of pupils in Southwark schools. Forty-five primary schools and seven secondary schools took part in the 2006 survey.

Schools are expected to record bullying inside school and more serious incidents outside school would be reported to the police as crime. Other instances of bullying outside school, such as name-calling and intimidation, racist and homophobic abuse or stealing small amounts of money, tend to fall between the gaps with no means for reporting it.

The information presented below is primarily based on children and young people's perceptions about whether they have experienced bullying.

### **Bullying at school**

Both teachers and students alike acknowledge that bullying occurs in Southwark schools. Some examples we heard were of year 8 students bullying year 7 students into giving them money; of a student who had suffered bullying by peers over a number of years for not conforming to other students' expectations of normality; and of a girl who had bullied others "because she was bored".

But how extensive is the problem?

#### 2006 Pupil Voice Survey

According to the 2006 Pupil Voice Survey, one-third of primary and secondary students said they had been bullied by other children at school that year. Being called names was the most common form of bullying, followed by being hit or kicked, having rumours spread about them, and feeling threatened. Being forced to hand over money or other possessions, or receiving nasty text messages/e-mails was reportedly less common.

However, there was considerable difference in the levels of bullying between individual schools in the borough. For example seven percent of the pupils at one primary school reported that they had experienced bullying often or quite often compared to 50% at another primary school. At secondary schools, the range of those who reported being bullied often or quite often varied from 0% to 37%. This could possibly reflect differences in the perception of what bullying is, suggest that some schools are much more effective at tackling bullying, or suggest that different parts of the borough have higher incidents of bullying. It is most likely a combination of all three factors.

It seems clear that the severity of bullying, when it occurs, is worse amongst secondary school students. Examples of bullying given by primary school children we talked to often seemed of a more low-level nature, such as being tripped up, hitting someone on the head with toys, or arguments about who to sit next to in class.

Secondary students were more likely to talk about the psychological nature of bullying. As one secondary student commented, older students “were capable of doing more serious things and in the knowledge that what they are doing is bad. Primary school children can more easily be controlled by the teachers”.

Both council survey data and the children and young people we spoke to informed us that constant bullying was taken seriously by the school and that the school did a good job in dealing with the bullying – though this was more likely to be the view from primary children rather than secondary students. As one primary school child commented “teachers tell off children for doing bad things because teachers don’t like bullying”.

### **Bullying outside the school setting**

Bullying outside school is of great concern for children and young people in Southwark.

This appears to be a greater problem in some areas of the borough than it is in others. For example, children at one primary school we visited in the North of the borough had plenty of stories to share about violence they had either witnessed or heard about outside the school environment, and the teacher commented on how it was a rougher area of Southwark so they were exposed to more acts of violence. At another primary school, the children guessed that bullying outside school was worse but had considerably less experience of this.

Older children hanging around in groups were perceived as intimidating. The primary school children told us they were scared of older children in parks and on the street. One boy told us that he was often bullied by a group of youths when he went down to the local corner shop for his mother. Another primary school child mentioned how he was scared going home with his teenage cousin because his cousin often got involved in fights on the way home.

Travel to and from school was cited as a particular problem, and secondary school children in particular are less likely to feel safe on their school journeys. According to Pupil Voice 2006, 84% of primary school children felt safe on school journeys compared to 71% of secondary school children. This is not surprising given that a peak time for the robbery of young people in Southwark is between 2pm and 4pm when they are on their way home from school, and the largest group of victims are 14 to 16 year olds. A headteacher at one secondary school in the borough told us of his dismay that his students felt scared going home on the train.

Safety outside school – particularly on journeys to and from school – is a serious concern and one the council needs to be taking seriously.

## 2. What are schools doing about bullying?

### Anti-bullying policies

*“Having an anti-bullying policy...is still the single most important thing a school can do in terms of preventing both bullying and litigation over it”*

(Evidence received from a teacher, February 2007)

Schools have a duty to combat bullying and headteachers are legally required to have a policy to prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. The students we spoke to during our review were aware that their school had an anti-bullying policy, although our survey indicated there may be one or two schools in Southwark who are still in the process of developing their policy.

The existence of an anti-bullying policy does not of itself guarantee that a school will be successful in tackling bullying. The literature on the subject emphasises the need for the whole school community to understand and be prepared to deliver the policy. Those who completed our survey were confident that teachers and teaching staff at their school were generally aware of their responsibilities under the school anti-bullying policy but were less sure that this was the case with governors, parents, support staff and volunteers.

Furthermore, there are striking differences between anti-bullying policies in place in Southwark schools. For example, one policy we looked at outlined the expectations of staff, gave clear guidance to pupils about what to do if they are being bullied, outlined to parents what they should do if their child is being bullied or if their child is bullying others and discussed the steps that the school would take. Another policy gave an overview of what the school would do but did not cover any of the other aspects about what the parent or child should do<sup>3</sup>.

We do not believe that it would be desirable for the council to try to prescribe in detail what a school’s policy should be. A truly home-grown policy is much more likely to be taken seriously than a policy which is perceived as being imposed from outside. But we do think that the council has a role to play in sharing best practice.

**We recommend that the council collates school anti-bullying policies and circulates good practice examples to head teachers and chairs of governors as an aid to other schools when reviewing their anti-bullying policies.**

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<sup>3</sup> This is not unique to Southwark – the Ofsted report also commented that many anti-bullying policies “were insufficiently detailed in their coverage of all the elements of effective action in schools”.



### Putting policies into effect

A policy is no use if it is not put into effect.

Our survey and site visits revealed that schools in Southwark also engage in a wide variety of activities to help combat bullying on an on-going basis.

Secondary schools, for example, tackle bullying by:

- Separate lunch hours for year groups
- Peer mediation
- Involvement of external agencies
- Developing an anti-bullying ethos
- Responding to all incidents promptly
- Supervision of all areas of school at breaks and lunchtime as well as before and after school
- Consideration in the school travel plans
- Restorative justice
- Peer mentoring between older and younger students

Primary schools also reported that they did most of the above<sup>4</sup>, with the addition of:

- Circle time e.g. to discuss friendships, conflict resolution, assertiveness and trust
- A 'bully box', whereby children can drop a note in a special post box which will be read and investigated by the school
- Discussions with school council
- Discussions at assembly e.g. using the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) materials
- The school ethos. Some examples of the ethos schools were promoting were mutual unconditional respect, friendly nurturing behaviour, encouraging a reporting culture, assuring students that they can speak to the teachers and be taken seriously
- Class role play
- Theatre group work
- 'Thinking circles'
- 'Place2Be' – an area in a primary school where children can express their feelings to an adult through talking, creative work and play
- As part of the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and citizenship scheme of work
- Employing learning mentors to support existing pastoral arrangements
- Employing a home school liaison worker
- Positive behaviour strategies such as playground buddies scheme and friendship benches
- Identifying areas of the school environment that could be bullying hotspots
- Encouraging a 'listening school'
- Staff vigilance and training
- Ensuring that students are clear on how and when to report incidents
- Responding to incidents promptly and involving parents where necessary
- Reporting back to victims and their parents
- Considering the impact of incidents outside school

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<sup>4</sup> In responding to our survey, no primary schools listed that they had separate lunch hours for year groups or used restorative justice.

- Anti-bullying workshops and resources
- An unacceptable behaviour book and consequences ladder (if they reach the top of the ladder children are rewarded for good behaviour, if they reach the bottom they would be listed in the headteacher's unacceptable behaviour book and a letter sent home to their parents)
- Monitoring of incident books
- Questionnaires to pupils and parents

In addition, we observed anti-bullying displays at some of the schools we visited (such as a poster stating "We say no to bullying. Reject it. Report it. Remove it"), as well as examples of posters that children had created during anti-bullying week.

Some schools involved external agencies in their anti-bullying work. Beatbullying, a children's charity which aims to reduce and prevent incidents and impact of bullying between young people, provided the sub-committee with several examples of work they had been involved with in Southwark schools. This included training students as peer listeners, and working with children in challenging conflict and developing a new mediation centre. Beatbullying had also worked with the early intervention team on a workshop aimed at primary school children considered at risk in the transition to secondary school.

However, one area which we do think that schools need to address is the reluctance of children and young people to report bullying to teaching staff. Two points came across strongly in every school we visited: students often felt that they were not taken seriously by teachers when they did report bullying<sup>5</sup>, and witnesses to bullying were unlikely to report it for fear they would be identified and targeted by the bully. Victims were unlikely to report bullying for fear the bullying would become worse.

This is consistent with the advice an assistant principal gave to the sub-committee, emphasising how important it was for children and young people to have an adult they could trust with their concerns. Not only do students need to be encouraged to share their concerns but they also need to be assured that school staff will listen and that their views will be treated confidentially and taken seriously. While this relates to the ethos of the school and to some extent the personalities of the school staff, the Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC) suggests it could help if anti-bullying policies set out the principles of confidentiality in which they operate<sup>6</sup>. This seems to be sensible advice.

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<sup>5</sup> Primary school students thought teachers were more likely to take bullying seriously if it was reported by their parents rather than themselves.

<sup>6</sup> Page 84, *Bullying today: a report by the office of the children's commissioner, with recommendations and links to practitioner tools*, Office of the Children's Commissioner, November 2006

### **Bullying outside school**

Bullying that takes place outside school is a complicated issue. While schools can work with other organisations such as Transport for London or the police around dealing with bullying outside school, teachers themselves have no more power than an ordinary citizen when intervening in bullying incidents outside school.

Guidance issued by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) circular 0354/2004 discusses the basis for excluding pupils for behaviour outside school. Behaviour on school business such as school trips or work experience placements is subject to the school's behaviour policy. Otherwise, there needs to be a clear link between the individual's behaviour and maintaining good behaviour and discipline amongst the whole student body.

It is possible that this could lead to inconsistent responses by the school depending on whether their pupils are the victims or the perpetrators of bullying outside school. It was suggested to us that if someone was caught bullying whilst in school uniform, the school was likely to step in because it was tarnishing the school's reputation. On the other hand, schools were less likely to become involved if someone in school uniform was being bullied outside school. This is an issue that schools need to think about.

### 3. Particular instances of good practice in Southwark schools

In the previous section, we outlined some methods used by Southwark schools to tackle bullying on an on-going basis.

We were reassured by the degree of consistency we found between the best practice recommendations in academic literature around bullying and what the schools were doing.

Some initiatives we came across during the review that we were particularly impressed by and would like to share are listed below.

#### 'Place2Be' and 'Place2Talk'

Under the Place2Be initiative, a counsellor comes into the primary school every week and children would be referred there by teachers if they needed emotional support. Reasons for referral could include if they were experiencing disruption in their home environment, if they were bullying others or if they were the victim of bullying. The child could express their feelings by talking, art, music or play. A room is set aside in the school for this purpose. According to [www.theplace2be.org.uk](http://www.theplace2be.org.uk), 11 primary schools in Southwark are involved with this initiative.

Place2Talk is a similar initiative, but rather than relying on teacher referrals, any child could pick up a piece of paper to say that they wanted to talk to someone who was not a teacher. The child would then be given a 10-minute appointment with the counsellor at lunchtime and could either attend the appointment on their own or take a friend for support. The primary school we spoke to about this initiative told us that it was used regularly by some children.

#### The Academy at Peckham's Community Inclusion Team

The community inclusion team is an initiative by which students are escorted on their school journey by a former student of the school who also lives on their estate. Members of the community inclusion team build up relationships with the students with involvement in other school activities, such as sports.

This initiative serves a dual purpose – as the former students also lived on the estates, they could also act as the liaison between the school and parents in cases where the parents were difficult to get hold of.

The community inclusion team is funded by the school.

#### Bullying agreement

One primary school had involved their pupils in putting together a code of conduct around bullying, which set out how to respond to bullying incidents. The agreement was signed by both the child and parents and would be kept on the child's file. It was to be re-signed annually.

In addition, sensible advice we received from a teacher about key principles for tackling bullying, and that we would like to mention, stressed the importance of:

- establishing school ethos
- taking incidents seriously, investigating, recording and acting upon them in a clear and consistent way
- involving and consulting staff, students and the families
- co-ordinating the anti-bullying work within the curriculum

Clearly, there are excellent examples of good practice in Southwark. However, there appears to be no existing mechanism for sharing information and experiences across the school network about bullying.

We need to ensure mechanisms are in place so that all schools are able to learn from those schools that deal with bullying effectively. This is a role that the council could fulfil.

**We recommend the council takes active steps to promote the sharing of information about bullying strategies so that schools can make informed decisions around which programmes to commission for their anti-bullying work. We think this would be best achieved by organising a two yearly bullying conference, which involves key people who deal with bullying both in and outside of school (including the school's bullying and behaviour lead, school police officers and the safer neighbourhood team).**

#### 4. What is the council doing to reduce the levels of bullying?

*“There are no direct legal responsibilities on local authorities to prevent bullying except in as much as local authorities have a duty to support their schools, which do have a responsibility to safeguard children and to agree a behaviour policy which must include a reference to tackling bullying.”*

(e-mail from the DfES, October 4 2006)

The sub-committee heard evidence that the council has, in partnership with other agencies, a number of activities and strategies aimed at reducing bullying in Southwark.

At the strategic level, the issue of bullying is included in the Young Southwark Children and Young People’s plan in 2006-07 to 2008-09. One aim of the Children’s Trust is to reduce the involvement of young people in offending and anti-social behaviour – both as victims and perpetrators. Amongst other things, the plan outlines that this will be achieved by

- providing safe environment where children can learn, play and socialise
- providing safe routes to and from schools though the visible presence of police school beat officers and neighbourhood wardens
- delivering educational programmes in schools and youth settings to promote citizenship and increase awareness of harmful behaviours and their possible effects, including support for implementation of anti-bullying policies.

Officers told us that some of this work is going on already. For example, community wardens are present at all secondary schools at the end of the school day to see that pupils can leave without intimidation or being subject to bullying. The wardens may report any concerns they have around bullying to the school or keep an eye on particular children/areas where it has been indicated that bullying may be an issue. They also work actively within schools to provide personal safety presentations and to develop good relationships with teachers and pupils.

Similarly, all secondary schools have a dedicated police school beat officer who works in the school and patrols the immediate area after school in conjunction with community wardens. The officers are trained in restorative justice so that they can resolve small incidents without resorting to the criminal justice system. Their role is to get to know the pupils, deal with small incidents in the school and pick up local intelligence about pupils’ concerns. School beat officers for primary schools are provided by the relevant safer neighbourhood team, depending on the priorities of the local community.

Encouragingly, teachers commented to us about the difference that police school beat officers have made. At one school, a teacher reported that there had been significant reductions in muggings and in groups from other schools causing problems outside the school gate. The headteacher of another school spoke very highly of their school beat officer, who was trusted and respected by the students and who voluntarily gave his time outside of working hours to support students where necessary.

The sub-committee was also informed that a number of teams work within the council, either directly or indirectly, to support schools with bullying and other behaviour issues. This includes the healthy schools team, the behaviour and autism support service, the education welfare service and the educational psychology service. Each school cluster in Southwark has a behaviour support professional to support a whole school approach for individual schools. Officers said that whenever the council is made aware of bullying issues in individual schools, support teams act quickly to ensure that schools are following their policies and making best use of the support that can be offered.

In terms of specific initiatives around bullying, the council recently issued guidance (*Prevention of bullying in schools: Southwark LEA Policy and Guidance for schools and education establishments*) to schools to support discussion, policy and procedures around preventing and responding to bullying. Our survey of schools indicated that three-quarters of schools considered the council's guidance useful and some schools commented that they would use it when they next review their anti-bullying policies.

The council also initiated the Agencies Supporting Schools Programme (ASSP) to support a whole-school approach on bullying. It provided teacher training, support in developing school anti-bullying policies and 'theatre in action' support to primary schools in 2004/05 and 2005/06. In 2006/07 and 2007/08 it will provide further theatre in action for these schools.

As far as we are aware, there has been no formal evaluation of the ASSP programme, although comments we have seen from theatre groups and schools who were involved were very positive about it. Beatbullying also informed us that schools not involved in the ASSP had requested the teacher notes, which again is a positive reflection on the programme.

Some other examples of initiatives in Southwark helping to combat bullying are:

- The council's road safety team works in conjunction with TfL, the police, the fire brigade and the rail safety partnership in sending Year 6 pupils to a day long activity session. The focus is on secondary transition in the recognition that many will soon be travelling independently to secondary school.
- Additional patrols are assigned to areas identified as borough 'hotspots' for robberies against young people both during and outside term time, based on analysis of patterns of crime. Dulwich Park and the Camberwell area are two areas of focus. There are also five 'school priority' routes in the borough directed at safety during travel on school journeys.

It is important that anti-bullying work is carried out strategically. During our review we became aware of the existence of the Anti-bullying Alliance (ABA), an independent body made up of 60 organisations including other local authorities, researchers and anti-bullying agencies. The ABA's function includes building the evidence base for effective practice and information-sharing, and the ABA's regional co-ordinators work with LEAs to support schools and develop links with a range of organisations and initiatives. We believe this would be of value to Southwark's anti-bullying work.

**We recommend the council becomes involved with the Anti-bullying Alliance.**

## 5. Bullying outside school

As highlighted earlier, we are concerned about the need to address safety outside school.

It is a complicated area and one that schools cannot be expected to tackle alone. Once outside the school environment teachers have no more power than an ordinary citizen to step in and respond to issues. Students disperse widely once they leave the school gate, with different means and routes for travelling home. Particularly at secondary school, students are less likely to have older people providing a level of protection on their journey home or in weekends, and may have greater distances to travel to get to school.

While we have evidenced some excellent examples aimed at improving safety outside school, such as the dedication displayed by some police school beat officers and the Community Inclusion Team at the Academy at Peckham, there appears to be no consistent strategic multi-agency co-ordination with schools to tackle bullying in the wider community.

We therefore think that the council should organise meetings on (initially) a termly basis to encourage coordination between safer neighbourhood teams, police school beat officers, bus and train operators and secondary schools in order to encourage multi-agency responses to problems that arise for students on the way to and from school. These meetings should be brokered by the council and a named officer in the children's services department should be charged with organising these meetings and preparing a note of each meeting to be sent to the executive member for children's services and education and the chair of overview and scrutiny.

Such a meeting would potentially go beyond issues of bullying and could include more general issues of behaviour on the way to and from school. For instance, we know that in some areas in the borough the journey home from school can be the occasion for muggings and violent incidents, and sometimes groups of children from one school mass outside the gates of another school in a threatening manner.

It is unlikely that most primary schools face sufficient problems with the school journey for them to wish to be involved, but they would be welcome to attend if they wanted to do so.

**We recommend that a council officer be identified and tasked with the responsibility of coordinating termly meetings between police beat officers, safer neighbourhood teams, secondary schools and bus and train operators to share information and coordinate initiatives aimed at ensuring that the journey to and from school is safe.**



## 6. What else did we learn?

### Staff training

Some of the teachers we spoke to during our review thought that it would be helpful if there was more training on bullying. The last Southwark training on bullying was a 'policy and practice' training held two years ago for headteachers and/or PSHE co-ordinators as part of the Agencies Supporting Schools Programme (ASSP).

Research shows that teachers often underestimate the frequency and severity of bullying and are often not sufficiently aware of different forms of bullying<sup>7</sup>. They are also more likely to consider physical bullying more serious and therefore more likely to intervene (thus boys are more likely to be identified as bullies compared to girls, who are more likely to be involved in verbal or psychological forms of bullying rather than physical bullying).

We acknowledge that teachers do have different strengths and some may place more emphasis on pastoral learning than others. However it is important that all teaching staff identify and challenge bullying at the earliest possible opportunity. One student, who was subjected to a sustained campaign of bullying over a number of years, commented to us that teachers needed to take students seriously because "teasing can become bullying, which can then lead to more serious issues such as suicide".

The Education and Skills select committee received evidence during their review contending that there is a need for more knowledge of bullying as part of initial teacher training. However, given the focus on addressing bullying in a collective and collaborative whole-school approach, the training could be better provided in-service, and filtered to all other teaching staff in the school as necessary<sup>8</sup>.

While we did not canvass the views of all schools in the borough on whether more training would be useful, it seems that there is a need – not only in Southwark but across England – for more training to be available.

**We recommend officers look into whether schools want more training around bullying. If so, the LEA should support this either by actively promoting the council and Southwark-wide services available, or by directly organising training days.**

### Provision of information to parents

Another theme that emerged during the review was that parents need more education around bullying. Comments we received from schools to our survey included:

*"Some parents use the term [bullying] to describe disagreements or incidents between children which are not of a bullying nature"*

<sup>7</sup> Page 55, *Bullying today: a report by the office of the children's commissioner, with recommendations and links to practitioner tools*, Office of the Children's Commissioner, November 2006

<sup>8</sup> The Ofsted report, for example, gives examples of how schools changed their procedures and systems as a result of in-service bullying training.

*“Parents need more understanding on what bullying is, perhaps parent classes. There is also a greater need for us as a school to make parents aware about bullying”*

*“Up to date parent/pupil leaflets would be a positive addition” [to the council’s anti-bullying policy guidance]*

Schools told us that parents knew who to approach if their child was being bullied, but they thought that parents did not always understand what bullying was and what to do about it.

Furthermore, many children and young people we spoke to said that there were conflicting messages between how they were told to deal with bullying at home (for example, to defend themselves) and what was acceptable at school. Some children and their parents expected that teachers would be able to resolve bullying incidents that occurred outside school.

Consideration needs to be given to ways to help educate parents about what bullying is and how to recognise and deal with it. While it is not reasonable to expect schools to deal with bullying on their own there are some steps they could take such as presenting information on bullying at their parent evening sessions.

### **Bullying disputes**

Our sub-committee also considered the November 2006 report by the Office for the Children’s Commissioner (OCC): *Bullying in schools in England: A review of the current complaints system and a discussion of options for change*.

The report outlined the difficulties parents had in escalating their complaints about how the school handled bullying cases. Most complaints would not get further than the governing board, which was not seen as particularly neutral due to its relationship with the headteacher. According to the OCC, the current system is regarded by many parents and children as “unable or unwilling to address issues of bullying in a fair, just and effective manner”<sup>9</sup>. Many members of the sub-committee have had similar concerns raised with us by parents in our role as ward councillors.

The report made some sensible recommendations for change, and there was one in particular that we would like to single out: the recommendation that local authorities establish independent mediation services for bullying disputes – both where parents and the school are in dispute, as well as child to child mediation.

In regards to child to child mediation, we are aware from our school visits that some Southwark schools already do some form of restorative justice. We are less sure of the value of duplicating systems already in place, though this may be worth further exploration.

However, a mediation service does seem a sensible way forward resolving disputes between parents and schools. While there are potential limitations, such as that it relies on the school and parents voluntarily getting together to discuss concerns, we

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<sup>9</sup> Page 22, Office for the Children’s Commissioner (OCC): *Bullying in schools in England: A review of the current complaints system and a discussion of options for change*, November 2006

believe that the approach should be trialled in Southwark. Further, we believe that the role of the mediation service be extended beyond that recommended in the OCC report and deal with all issues between parents and schools in Southwark, not just bullying disputes.

**We recommend the council coordinates a mediation service on a trial basis to resolve any disputes between parents and schools, including disputes that relate to incidents of bullying. We think that schools should pay for this service on a case-by-case basis, but the council should organise the provision.**

## Cyberbullying

During the review, teachers shared concerns about the challenges being presented by information technologies. Teachers shared examples of children being persuaded to send their photos to people they met on internet chatrooms, or young people's sexual experiences being videoed on mobile phones and shared across a large group of peers. Similarly we are aware from national media that there have been cases where websites have been set up by students to humiliate teachers, though we are not aware of any examples of this in Southwark.

On the other hand, 'cyberbullying'<sup>10</sup>, as this form of bullying is termed, was not raised by *any* of the children and young people we spoke to during the review so perhaps it is not yet a mainstream form of bullying.

The 2006 Pupil Voice survey presented similar information: only around five percent of those primary and secondary pupils in Southwark who said they had experienced bullying over the past year reported that this was via nasty text messages or e-mail. This information is consistent with that presented to the Education and Skills select committee that cyberbullying is not currently as prevalent as suggested by some pieces of research or by the media.

Nonetheless, it is an area that may become more prevalent and needs to be addressed. The DfES have recently made guidance available on the Teachernet website about cyberbullying, but this is from the perspective of helping children stay safe and does not discuss what teachers should be doing to protect themselves from possible cyberbullying. The council's guidance on bullying makes no reference to cyberbullying, and according to our survey, very few schools include cyberbullying in their anti-bullying policies.

School staff and children and young people need protection from a modern technology which is capable of following them into their homes.

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<sup>10</sup> Cyberbullying is bullying using information technology communications, such as text messaging, e-mails, chatrooms and internet blogs

## **Gambling**

A further issue we picked up during our review is that of gambling by children and young people. We heard from one secondary school teacher that 'pound-up', whereby students throw a pound coin towards the wall and whoever is closest to the wall gets all the money, is a big issue in schools. Another teacher commented on the lack of support available to schools as gambling amongst children is not recognised as a problem.

While this issue is not directly related to bullying, we have raised it because we do not want it to be ignored. There is evidence that taking part in gambling activities as a child or young person puts them a greater risk of subsequent gambling problems. Other research has associated it with lying and stealing, disruptive relationships at home and disruptive behaviour at school.<sup>11</sup>

The council should be proactively seeking information to determine to what extent gambling is an issue among children and young people in Southwark, and what action needs to be taken to address it. A good starting point would be talking to schools, although we do not necessarily expect the gambling to be occurring within the school environment.

**We recommend that executive tasks an officer to investigate the extent to which gambling is a problem amongst children and young people in Southwark.**

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<sup>11</sup> See for example, <http://www.co.lane.or.us/prevention/gambling/Youth.htm>

## 7. Our recommendations

Our recommendations are collated below.

### Recommendation 1

We recommend that a council officer be identified and tasked with the responsibility of coordinating termly meetings between police beat officers, safer neighbourhood teams, secondary schools and bus and train operators to share information and coordinate initiatives aimed at ensuring that the journey to and from school is safe.

### Recommendation 2

We recommend the council takes active steps to facilitate the sharing of information about bullying strategies amongst schools and other key agencies. This should include:

- organising a two yearly bullying conference
- collating school anti-bullying policies and circulating good practice examples to head teachers and chairs of governors as an aid to other schools when reviewing their anti-bullying policies
- becoming involved with the Anti-Bullying Alliance.

### Recommendation 3

We recommend the council coordinates a mediation service on a trial basis to resolve any disputes between parents and schools, including disputes that relate to incidents of bullying. We think that schools should pay for this service on a case-by-case basis, but the council should organise the provision.

### Recommendations 4 and 5

We have also identified two specific areas we think officers need to research further and report back to executive on:

We recommend officers look into whether schools want more training around bullying. If so, the LEA should support this either by actively promoting the council and Southwark-wide services available, or by directly organising training days.

We recommend that executive tasks an officer to look into what extent gambling is a problem amongst children and young people in Southwark.

## Acknowledgements

We would like thank everyone who contributed to our review:

- Students on the school councils of Albion primary school, Joseph Lancaster primary school, Goodrich primary school, St John's and St Clement's Church of England primary school, St Thomas the Apostle College, Walworth School - as well as their teachers
- All the Southwark schools who took part in our questionnaire about anti-bullying policies and initiatives
- Southwark council officers from the community safety team, children's services department, legal division and scrutiny team
- John Quinn, development director at Beatbullying
- Peter Blewett, assistant principal at the Academy at Peckham

We initially thought that teachers and students would be reluctant to talk about bullying. In fact, we found quite the opposite, with people keen to share their experiences and thoughts with us and so would like to express our gratitude to those teachers and young people we spoke to for their openness and honesty. We were particularly impressed by the maturity and thoughtfulness of all students who were members of their school council.

## Appendix

### Summary of responses to the scrutiny questionnaire

#### **Bullying of children and young people in Southwark: School anti-bullying policies**

January 2007

This paper summarises a survey carried out for the children's services and education scrutiny sub-committee as part of their review into bullying of children and young people in Southwark.

In considering these findings, it is important to bear in mind that the survey is based on a small sample size and therefore gives a flavour, rather than a definitive picture, of what is happening in the borough.

#### **Purpose of the survey**

The purpose of the survey was to understand how schools develop and maintain their anti-bullying policies. It was based on the council's anti-bullying guidance *Preventing bullying in schools: Southwark LEA policy and guidance for schools and education establishments*, produced in January 2006.

#### **Survey method**

The questionnaire was sent to headteachers at all pupil referral units and maintained primary and secondary schools in Southwark during November 2006. Thirty-five responses were received (six from secondary schools, one from a pupil referral unit, one from a special school and 27 from primary schools) - a response rate of 36%.

#### **Findings**

1. All schools except one had an anti-bullying policy.
2. Schools were confident their policy had clear and identifiable links to, and were consistent with, their behaviour and safeguarding policies. The majority of the policies formed part of the schools' behaviour management policies.
3. Half of schools used the council's anti-bullying guidance when developing their anti-bullying policy though the guidance was produced too late for many schools (although some noted they would use it when reviewing their policy).
4. Three-quarters of schools found the council's guidance useful e.g. to start discussions, ensure that all relevant aspects were considered. While it was considered comprehensive by some, others thought it would be better if more concise.
5. Practically all schools consulted with both pupils and teachers, and to a lesser extent, with teaching assistants when developing their policy. Over half of schools

also consulted with parents and support staff. Few schools liaise with local police, the local authority, other schools or organisations.

6. Nearly all schools consulted with staff and pupils about how bullying should be reported and dealt with. Pupils were less likely to be included in discussions about how bullying should be recorded.
7. A third of school anti-bullying policies contained information about bullying by staff.
8. Few schools mentioned cyber-bullying and bullying outside of the school gate within their anti-bullying policy.
9. Schools commonly involved their pupils, teachers and teaching assistants when reviewing the effectiveness of their anti-bullying initiatives. Local authority staff, other schools and the local police were less frequently consulted or informed about the results of such reviews.
10. A third of schools reported that their anti-bullying policy would be reviewed within a year. A quarter of schools had not yet set timescales for reviewing the policy.
11. Everyone who completed the survey on behalf of the school believed that teachers and teaching assistants were aware of their responsibilities under their anti-bullying policies and three-quarters thought the same of school governors. Half of those responding to the survey thought that parents and support staff were aware of their responsibilities and a third thought volunteers were.
12. Most schools recorded incidents of bullying other than those required to be reported to the local authority i.e. race-related incidents and exclusions. The most common means of recording bullying was using an incident sheet/book.
13. There was an even split between schools around whether they provided information about bullying incidents to their governing bodies – a third did, another third provided it occasionally and the remainder not at all. The headteacher report was the most common way of reporting such information to the governing body.
14. Schools had a variety of ways of monitoring bullying at school. A number of the schools found the council's pupil voice survey useful for this purpose (although this was not the intention behind the survey), and a few schools had developed their own check-lists or used DfES check-lists/audits. Other ways included parent and pupil questionnaires, audits of the incidence book or other recording systems, playground monitoring and feedback from the school council.
15. Nearly all schools either had a designated person who led on bullying and behaviour issues, or intended to set up a lead. The lead was most often the headteacher or deputy headteacher, though others listed were the learning mentor/co-ordinator, behaviour manager, head of year and PSHE co-ordinator.
16. A third of schools had, or intended to set up, a bullying and behaviour action group. Over half of schools saw no need for such a group – for example, one school considered it would "institutionalise bullying" and commented how bullying generally involved individuals rather than the whole school; other schools felt that their peer mediation group or school council would suffice.



17. Schools had a variety of ways for tackling bullying on an on-going basis including through their school ethos, anti-bullying displays, talks at school assemblies, constant monitoring and vigilance and responding to all reported incidents of bullying. Other strategies included playground buddies, 'bully boxes' where students could write down their concerns, peer mediation, peer monitoring, circle time, identifying potential problem areas within the school environment and separate lunch hours for year groups.
18. Most schools were confident that parents knew who to approach if their child was being bullied. However, schools were less sure that parents understood what bullying is and what to do about it.
19. Additional comments from schools were generally along the themes of parental understanding and definitions of bullying:

*"Difficult to know how to be more specific about definition of 'bullying'. Some parents use the term to describe disagreements or incidents between children which are not of a bullying nature"*

*"Parents need more understanding on what bullying is, perhaps parent classes. There is also a greater need for us as a school to make parents aware about bullying"*

*"Up to date parent/pupil leaflets would be a positive addition"* [referring to the council's anti-bullying policy guidance]

*"The current focus on 'bullying' as some sort of pandemic is not useful. The word is now used as a cover all for a disagreement, conflict or tiff. Bullying is a specific act or series of acts directed by one individual/s with the specific purpose of putting them down or hurting them. Children have arguments and fall out. This is a natural process of growing up and learning about boundaries. It would be helpful if the literature made this clear."*

Prepared by Carina Kane, scrutiny project manager, January 2007

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 12 September 2012	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Bullying - school and council policy in supporting vulnerable children and reducing abusive and poor peer relations	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Deputy Director of Children's Services - Education	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. To note the information in this report and appendix, which provide the information requested by the Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. In March 2007, the then Children's Services and Education Scrutiny sub committee examined the issue of bullying in schools and made a series of recommendations for moving forward. At the time of this investigation, local authorities were working to the government's 'Safe to Learn Guidance'. This included information on how the local authority should support schools.
3. More widely, supporting vulnerable children is a key priority of the council, as set out in the Children and Young People's Plan and Council Plan. These strategic frameworks commit the local authority and partners to keep children and young people safe, and provide opportunities to enable them to flourish and achieve their full potential.
4. In March 2012, the Department for Education issued revised guidance for "Preventing and tackling bullying", which shifted responsibilities to schools. The guidance made only one reference to a local authority having a role – that when a bullying incident is so severe it is should be addressed as a child protection issue under Children Act 1989 statutory duties.
5. The guidance describes bullying as:  
*"Bullying is behavior by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived*

*differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case."*

6. The guidance makes special reference to the rise of the concept of "cyber-bullying":  
*"The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click."*
7. The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones.

### KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

8. The following table summaries the progress that has been made against the March 2007 recommendations:

Recommendation	Response
We recommend that a council officer be identified and tasked with the responsibility of coordinating termly meetings between police beat officers, safer neighbourhood teams, secondary schools and bus and train operators to share information and coordinate initiatives aimed at ensuring that the journey to and from school is safe.	The Safer Schools Steering Group which meets half-termly to discuss these issues. The nucleus group consists of the following roles: Partnership and Criminal Justice Police Superintendent Safer Neighbourhood Chief Inspector Southwark H/Ts Representative YOS Rep Southwark Community Safety Police Sergeant, Youth Engagement Team Southwark early Help Team
We recommend the council takes active steps to facilitate the sharing of information about bullying strategies amongst schools and other key agencies. This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organising a two yearly bullying conference</li> <li>• collating school anti-bullying policies and circulating good practice examples to head teachers</li> </ul>	An Anti-bullying toolkit was produced for schools and the youth services. Schools were supported to take part in national anti-bullying week each November Case studies on activities were shared with schools

<p>and chairs of governors as an aid to other schools when reviewing their anti-bullying policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• becoming involved with the Anti-Bullying Alliance.</li> </ul>	
<p>We recommend the council coordinates a mediation service on a trial basis to resolve any disputes between parents and schools, including disputes that relate to incidents of bullying. We think that schools should pay for this service on a case-by-case basis, but the council should organise the provision.</p>	<p>Officers worked with the Southwark Mediation Service (SMS) to develop resources for schools. SMS have provided training for peer mentors in many of our schools.</p>
<p>We have also identified two specific areas we think officers need to research further and report back to executive on: We recommend officers look into whether schools want more training around bullying. If so, the LEA should support this either by actively promoting the council and Southwark-wide services available, or by directly organising training days.</p>	<p>The PSHE team arranged regular training events for all schools and bespoke training to individual schools - plus multi agency training for our partner organisations</p>
<p>We recommend that executive tasks an officer to look into what extent gambling is a problem amongst children and young people in Southwark.</p>	<p>Officers found no evidence that that gambling was a particular problem in Southwark schools. As a precautionary measure all secondary schools were provided with a nationally developed resource to help schools recognise and deal with any issues related to gambling.</p>

9. Under legislation introduced by the current government many statutory duties have passed from the local authority to schools. . This coupled with budget cuts have reduced the level of universal support on offer to schools.
10. Evidence from Ofsted suggests that schools are however now well equipped to deal with these issues and have robust processes in place to protect young people.
11. In January 2012 the Ofsted framework for the inspection of schools changed to include a requirement to investigate bullying in schools.

12. Just under a third of Southwark schools have been reported on under the arrangements of the current Ofsted framework since January 2012. Inspectors judged that in those schools visited:
- Pupils/students' awareness of types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and racist and homophobic abuse, was well developed and that they knew how to keep themselves safe.
  - In over 70% bullying is very rare and pupils/students and the wider school community have confidence that incidents are resolved effectively and quickly.
  - In 29% pupils/students reported that they had not experienced bullying and that the community did not tolerate it any form
13. Until September 2011 the local authority eLearning team provided schools with support in developing on line safety policies and procedures. The London grid for Learning continues to provide support for all schools in tackling these issues. Many of our schools have developed effective eSafety policies. [www.lgfl.net/esafety](http://www.lgfl.net/esafety)
14. The recent triennial inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services by Ofsted also praised the experience and expertise of schools and the local authority in supporting vulnerable children and young people. Inspectors highlighted work to counter cyber-bullying, as well as the work of the youth offending team around restorative justice.
15. Both the Connexions Team and the Early Help team work directly with young people in schools who are either disengaged from learning or have poor attendance. All professionals are trained to spot when this disengagement is the result of bullying and are experienced at working with the host institution to deal with the root causes.
16. The local safeguarding children board, alongside the children's trust, provides multi-agency leadership across safeguarding issues, including bullying. This includes, for example, child sexual exploitation, which the safeguarding board's practice, development and training sub-group is currently investigating. It is planned that this issue will be a focal point of the safeguarding board's annual conference in November.

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Preventing and tackling bullying

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Merril Haeusler, Deputy Director Children's Services
<b>Report Author</b>	Darren Coghlan, Head of Specialist Education Services
<b>Version</b>	Final

<b>Dated</b>	22 August 2012	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Director of Legal Services	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Scrutiny Team</b>		4 September 2012



Department  
for Education

# Preventing and tackling bullying

**Advice for head teachers, staff  
and governing bodies**

# Preventing and tackling bullying

## Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies

### About this advice

This document has been produced to help schools prevent and respond to bullying as part of their overall behaviour policy, to understand their legal responsibilities in this area, and to understand the Department's approach.

### Who is this advice for?

Some of this advice is primarily aimed at:

- school staff, head teachers and governors in schools, Sixth forms and colleges including Academies, Free schools, Pupil Referral Units and alternative providers.
- This guidance also applies to independent schools, but their statutory obligations are different as noted in relevant sections.

It may also be useful for:

- FE and community settings.

### What's changed?

This document replaces previous advice – “Safe To Learn: embedding anti-bullying work in schools”. It outlines, in one place, the Government's approach to bullying, legal obligations and the powers schools have to tackle bullying, and the principles which underpin the most effective anti-bullying strategies in schools. It also lists further resources through which school staff can access specialist information on the specific issues that they face.

## What does the law say and what do I have to do?

### The Education and Inspections Act 2006

There are a number of statutory obligations on schools with regard to behaviour which establish clear responsibilities to respond to bullying. In particular section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006:

- provides that every school must have measures to encourage good behaviour and **prevent all forms of bullying** amongst pupils. These measures should be part of the school's behaviour policy which must be communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents;
- gives head teachers the ability to discipline pupils for poor behaviour that occurs even when the pupil is not on school premises or under the lawful control of school staff.



More detailed advice on teachers' powers to discipline, including their power to punish pupils for misbehaviour that occurs outside school, is included in "*Behaviour and discipline in schools – advice for head teachers and school staff*" – see further sources of information below.

**The legislation outlined above does not apply to independent schools.**

## **The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. A key provision is a new public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. It replaces the three previous public sector equality duties for race, disability and gender, and covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Schools are required to comply with the new Equality Duty.

The Act also makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for pupils, provision of pupil access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment. In England and Wales the Act applies to all maintained and independent schools, including Academies and Free Schools, and maintained and non-maintained special schools.

## **Safeguarding children and young people**

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to their local authority children's social care. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

## **Criminal law**

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an

offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

## **Bullying outside school premises**

Head teachers have a specific statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives head teachers the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff (*this legislation does not apply to independent schools*). This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The head teacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

## **What is bullying?**

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

## **Cyber-bullying**

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones. Separate advice on teachers' powers to search (including statutory guidance on dealing with electronic devices) is available – see below for a link to this document.

For more information on how to respond to cyber-bullying and how pupils can keep themselves safe, please refer to the Childnet International and Beatbullying links under 'further resources'.

## Dealing with bullying

Successful schools have policies in place to deal with bullying and poor behaviour which are clear to parents, pupils and staff so that, when incidents do occur, they are dealt with quickly. However a school chooses to define bullying for the purposes of its own behaviour policy, it should be clearly communicated and understood by pupils, parents, and staff. Successful schools create an environment that prevents bullying from being a serious problem in the first place. School staff, head teachers and governors are best placed to decide how best to respond to the particular issues that affect their pupils. There is no single solution to bullying which will suit all schools.

## Prevention

A school's response to bullying should not start at the point at which a child has been bullied. The best schools develop a more sophisticated approach in which school staff proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. This might involve talking to pupils about issues of difference, perhaps in lessons, through dedicated events or projects, or through assemblies. Staff themselves will be able to determine what will work best for their pupils, depending on the particular issues they need to address.

Schools which excel at tackling bullying have created an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment and are reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to the rest.

## Intervention

Schools should apply disciplinary measures to pupils who bully in order to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong. Disciplinary measures must be applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that the pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils. It is also important to consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case the child engaging in bullying may need support themselves.

The organisations listed in the 'further resources' section provide a range of practical resources for schools to help staff develop their own approaches to different issues which might motivate bullying and conflict.

Successful schools also:

- **involve parents** to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. Parents feel confident that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child, and they reinforce the value of good behaviour at home;

- **involve pupils.** All pupils understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders;
- **regularly evaluate** and update their approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating 'acceptable use' policies for computers;
- **implement disciplinary sanctions.** The consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable;
- **openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying**, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexuality. Also children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities. Schools can also teach children that using any prejudice based language is unacceptable;
- **use specific organisations or resources for help with particular problems.** Schools can draw on the experience and expertise of anti-bullying organisations with a proven track record and / or specialised expertise in dealing with certain forms of bullying;
- **provide effective staff training.** Anti-bullying policies are most effective when all school staff understand the principles and purpose of the school's policy, its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems, and where to seek support. Schools can invest in specialised skills to help their staff understand the needs of their pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and/or disability (SEND) and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGB&T) pupils;
- **work with the wider community** such as the police and children's services where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and where a criminal offence may have been committed. Successful schools also work with other agencies and the wider community to tackle bullying that is happening outside school;
- **make it easy for pupils to report bullying** so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. Pupils should feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside school including cyber-bullying;
- **create an inclusive environment.** Schools should create a safe environment where pupils can openly discuss the cause of their bullying, without fear of further bullying or discrimination; and
- **celebrate success.** Celebrating success is an important way of creating a positive school ethos around the issue.

## Schools' accountability

Pupils will learn best in a safe and calm environment that is free from disruption and in which education is the primary focus.

The new Ofsted framework which came into force in January 2012 includes 'behaviour and safety' as one of its key criteria for inspections. Schools should be able to demonstrate the impact of anti-bullying policies.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Should we prioritise tackling some types of bullying over others?**

Immediate physical safety obviously comes first. All bullying, whatever the motivation or method, is unacceptable and should not be tolerated. Some issues will be more familiar to schools than others and this guidance points to other specialist organisations for further information about how to tackle specific types of bullying. Please see 'Further Sources of Information' at the end of this document.

### **Should I discipline pupils for bullying outside the school?**

Yes. If an incident of bullying outside the school premises is reported to the school, it is important that it is investigated and appropriate action is taken. This will send a strong signal to pupils that bullying will not be tolerated and perpetrators will be held to account.

### **How do schools with a religious character – or schools dealing with parents with particular religious beliefs – respond to prejudice based bullying?**

Notwithstanding the particular tenets of their faith, schools with a religious character should uphold the values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect towards others and condemn all forms of bullying, as in any other school.

### **How can we involve parents more in our anti-bullying work?**

Schools should talk to parents about their anti-bullying policy and make it available to them and prospective parents as part of their behaviour policy. Schools should ensure that parents know what measures are being taken to prevent bullying, as well as how incidents are responded to, and may also encourage positive messages about good behaviour and respect for others at home.

### **Should I record incidents of bullying?**

Staff should develop a consistent approach to monitoring bullying incidents in their school and evaluating whether their approach is effective. For some schools, that will mean recording incidents so that they can monitor incident numbers and identify where bullying is recurring between the same pupils. Others do not want to keep written records. We want schools to exercise their own judgment as to what will work best for their pupils.

## Further Sources of Information

### Department for Education resources:

DfE Behaviour and Discipline in Schools Guidance:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/f0076803/advice-for-headteachers-and-school-staff-on-behaviour-and-discipline>

Make Them Go Away (A video resource about bullying involving young children with disabilities)

Let's Fight it Together (A video resource about Cyber-bullying)

### Legislative links:

Schools' duty to promote good behaviour (Education and Inspections Act 2006 Section 89)

Power to tackle poor behaviour outside school (Education and Inspections Act 2006 Section 89(5))

The Equality Act 2010

### Specialist organisations:

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA): Founded in 2002 by NSPCC and National Children's Bureau, the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) brings together over 100 organisations into one network to develop and share good practice across the whole range of bullying issues.

Beatbullying: A bullying prevention charity with an emphasis on working directly with children and young people. In addition to lesson plans and resources for parents, Beatbullying have developed the Cybermentors peer support programme for young people affected by cyber-bullying.

Kidscape: Charity established to prevent bullying and promote child protection providing advice for young people, professionals and parents about different types of bullying and how to tackle it. They also offer specialist training and support for school staff, and assertiveness training for young people.

Restorative Justice Council: Includes best practice guidance for practitioners 2011.

### Cyber-bullying:

ChildNet International: Specialist resources for young people to raise awareness of online safety and how to protect themselves.

**LGBT:**

EACH: A training agency for employers and organisations seeking to tackle discrimination on the grounds of gender and sexual orientation.

Schools Out: Offers practical advice, resources (including lesson plans) and training to schools on LGBT equality in education.

Stonewall: An LGB equality organisation with considerable expertise in LGB bullying in schools, a dedicated youth site, resources for schools, and specialist training for teachers.

**SEND:**

Mencap: Represents people with learning disabilities, with specific advice and information for people who work with children and young people.

Changing Faces: Provide online resources and training to schools on bullying because of physical difference.

*Please note that internal servers may block access to some of these sites. Schools wishing to access these materials may need to adjust their settings.*





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## Scrutiny review proposal

### 1 What is the review?

The council's role with maintained, academy and free schools - exploring what our governance and influencing levers are in a changing context, and how the council can promote good performance, and tackle poor performance.

### 2 What outcomes could realistically be achieved? Which agency does the review seek to influence?

### 3 When should the review be carried out/completed? i.e. does the review need to take place before/after a certain time?

### 4 What format would suit this review? (e.g. full investigation, Q&A with cabinet member/partners, public meeting, one-off session)

### 5 What are some of the key issues that you would like the review to look at?

### 6 Who would you like to receive evidence and advice from during the review?

### 7 Any suggestions for background information? Are you aware of any best practice on this topic?

CSN Policy Briefing

Local authority role in education – final report from the ISOS Partnership for Ministerial Advisory Group.

### 8 What approaches could be useful for gathering evidence? What can be done outside committee meetings?

e.g. verbal or written submissions, site visits, mystery-shopping, service observation, meeting with stakeholders, survey, consultation event



# CSN POLICY BRIEFING

## Local authority role in education – final report from the ISOS Partnership for the Ministerial Advisory Group

Date 2 July 2012

Author Martin Rogers  
LGiU/CSN Associate

### Summary

The final report for the Ministerial Advisory Group on the action research into the evolving role of the local authority in education (undertaken by ISOS Partnership) has been published. It includes much useful information, and valuable insights, on how local authorities are adapting to the increasingly autonomous school system and how they are approaching key elements of their role.

### Overview

The DfE's Ministerial Advisory Group on the role of LAs, established in summer 2010, commissioned the Local Authority Action Research (LAAR) project in autumn 2011 (from ISOS partnership) to explore how local authorities (LAs) are adapting to the increasingly diverse and autonomous school system. The DfE has now published its final report, which includes much useful information, and valuable insights, on how local authorities are adapting to the increasingly autonomous school system and how they are approaching key elements of their role. This is the latest contribution to a series of documents exploring the evolving role of LAs (see 'related briefings'). The research focused on three core responsibilities of the LA in education:

1. ensuring a sufficient supply of school places;
2. tackling underperformance in schools and ensuring high standards;
3. supporting vulnerable children.

The project was conducted in two phases, with nine LAs (one of which dropped out for phase two) covering a range of different contexts in terms of the type and proportion of schools (especially Academies) in their areas; the sample was balanced in terms of size, geography, urban and rural, and political leadership. Phase one, covered by the [interim report](#) (see [related briefing](#)), was evidence gathering through fieldwork visits to each of the nine LAs and interviews with key stakeholders, and a brief review of relevant published literature. Phase two supported the participating LAs to further develop aspects of their role, in the context of growing numbers of Academies and Free Schools, by using action research methodologies. The authorities completed a self-evaluation matrix at the beginning and the end of the process, and a log of their activities, the successes and challenges – which were used to inform the final report, which makes use of many case studies to illustrate different approaches to the issues.

# CSN POLICY BRIEFING

The report is in five sections: the context and strategic response; ensuring a sufficient supply of school places; school improvement; supporting vulnerable children; and looking forward.

## Briefing in full

### The context and strategic response

The LAs taking part in the action research represent four different educational contexts: a high proportion of established Academies; a high proportion of recently converted Academies; a diverse mix of different types of autonomous school; and a high proportion of community, VA or VC schools. The period during which the research was conducted (November 2011 to May 2012) saw rapid change at both national and local levels, with most LAs undergoing a period of restructuring and transformation to meet savings targets, and many seeing changing patterns in demand for education (eg. rising demand for primary places, changes in demand for post-16 provision, and rising demand for places in special schools). And between 30 November 2011 and 31 May 2012, the number of sponsored Academies nationally increased by 38 and the number of convertor Academies increased by 348. The rate of change across the participating LAs varied greatly. Two other significant changes were the introduction in January 2012 of Ofsted's new inspection framework for schools (which raised the bar, and increased the focus on the quality of teaching), and the DfE consultation on the future of schools' funding from 2013-14. Local authority roles in public health, community safety, housing, planning and regeneration, and the localism agenda are also evolving.

The interim report concluded that LAs are at very different points in managing the transition necessitated by the growth in the numbers of Academies and Free Schools, and the research has gained some insights into both the process of transition and how the shape and nature of the participating LAs' role is being defined differently according to local contexts and priorities. The consolidated list of returns to the self-evaluation questionnaire is an annex to the report, which makes frequent reference to the findings.

Key points from this section include:

- most of the LAs believed they had a clear and well-defined vision of how they will support the quality of education for all local pupils over the next two years, which they felt is shared and understood by stakeholders; some were less confident that the vision was shared between members and officers, with both clear what role they are playing in achieving it and some highlighted tensions between the views of the leadership (lead members and senior officers) and those of 'backbench' councillors
- only half were confident they had the capacity to take the vision forward
- unless/until all schools become Academies, LAs will have to balance their responsibilities as a maintaining authority with the new demands of the evolving system
- LAs are more confident about having constructive discussions with local Academy sponsors when issues arise than with convertor Academies (particularly 'stand-alone' ones)
- there is pressure to arrive at a solution quickly (with maintained schools especially keen for clarity), but one lesson from the research is that this is not a process that can be rushed

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and still be successful; there is a danger of arriving at a superficial consensus to which everyone can sign up because it fails to tackle the difficult questions

- a second lesson is that there is a benefit in using practical and current challenges as a way of exploring how the LA can add most value in the new landscape, enabling the debate about the LA role and the nature of the partnership with schools to be evidence-based and experiential
- one differentiating factor in how well LAs are adapting appears to be the strength of existing relationships with schools and Academy sponsors. This carries a risk that future effectiveness could become too dependent on specific individuals and too prone to disruption when they move on; local governance arrangements that bring key partners together and create a sense of moral obligation help counter this
- schools feel that now is the time for LAs to be confident, seize the agenda and demonstrate their leadership on difficult and intransigent issues (eg. fair access)
- there is significant concern amongst schools about the paring back of LA services, and the ability of LAs to retain good quality staff
- schools are clear that the future of the education system lies in the strength of their partnerships, but headteachers are aware that these can be fragile, and dependent on the goodwill of the individuals concerned
- LAs are beginning to develop three broad roles:
  - convenor of partnerships – at times providing the external and objective arbitration which helps keep them effective, and facilitating partnerships between a broad range of providers and services
  - maker and shaper of effective commissioning – engaging as an intelligent commissioner of schools, becoming a provider of support services and challenge, and facilitating schools and parents in making effective commissioning decisions
  - champion of pupils, parents and communities – which sits well alongside their broader responsibilities in developing effective, cohesive ‘places’ and their democratic mandate to ensure good outcomes for children and young people.

## Ensuring a sufficient supply of school places

Evidence from the research suggests that school place planning is becoming more problematic in the context of increasing school autonomy, as the sum of decisions by individual schools (made in the best interests of pupils and parents at the school) does not meet the interests of a whole community. The current bulge in primary pupil numbers will feed through to the secondary sector, with a far higher proportion of Academies; there is already evidence of Academies choosing not to expand, and community schools looking to Academy status to avoid expansion. While most of the LAs felt they had the skills and understanding to run a successful competition for a new school, half felt they lacked a good understanding of the market place of potential providers. LAs perceived two main areas of risk to their ability to act as intelligent commissioners of new school places: a lack of transparency in central government about potential Academy sponsors and their strengths, weaknesses and track record; and the short notice they sometimes receive of Free School applications.

A potential consequence of the policy to allow successful schools to expand is that, in areas with static or falling pupil numbers, a neighbouring school may become unviable – but (for a variety of reasons) its closure may not be a good solution. To date, it appears that local collective self-

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regulating mechanisms are not proving effective in influencing the decisions that schools make individually.

Another complex aspect of place planning is determining the pattern of post-16 provision, which arose as a specific issue in more than half of the LAs during the research. There is a very diverse partnership of providers, and there are changes in the profile of demand created by the raising of the participation age, rising youth unemployment, shifting demographics and significant changes to qualifications. A critical issue is ensuring the right balance between vocational and more academic routes when many newly formed Academies wish to open sixth forms.

A series of case studies describe the different ways in which LAs have addressed these issues.

## School improvement

With Teaching Schools, National Leaders of Education (NLEs) and Local Leaders of Education (LLEs) there is significant capacity in the system to deliver school-to-school support. Sponsored Academy chains also provide a mechanism for sharing support, challenge and expertise between schools in the chain, some of which have become Teaching School alliances. But LAs remain accountable for securing good outcomes for all children and young people in their area, and have a statutory duty to exercise their education functions with a view to promoting high standards and the fulfilment of learning potential – so they need to try and ensure that a school-to-school support model is coherent and comprehensive, and that every school has access to a range of high quality support and receives the necessary external support and challenge to secure improvement or sustain outstanding quality.

LAs are more confident about the ability of secondary schools to commission this external support effectively than primary schools. They emphasised the need to build understanding of the commissioning cycle in primary schools, from needs analysis through to robust quality assurance. The research showed that teaching school alliances are becoming an important route for schools to source high quality support from other schools in their area, and there is evidence from the experience of some of the participating LAs that their positive and strategic engagement with teaching schools can lead to strong collaborative partnerships; but feedback from teaching schools suggests that not all LAs are able to play this productive role. And the research found that, while LAs see the potential of teaching schools, there are concerns that the designation can be fragile because it is tied to an individual headteacher who might move on (a risk that the National College is working to mitigate); there is also concern that some teaching schools are only keen to work with schools which have the capacity to improve, and not tackle the really hard cases.

LAs and headteachers shared an anxiety about how the education system as a whole, in the context of greater autonomy, will ensure that there is a coherent and sufficient response to school failure and persistent underperformance. There is a question about whether LAs will continue to have sufficient capacity to effectively support and challenge their maintained schools, and they are likely to draw increasingly on expertise from within their schools to support improvement. A further anxiety for LAs, echoed by others, is whether there is sufficient shared intelligence in a more autonomous school system to spot the signs of declining performance in a school before it impacts on results at Key Stage 2, or GCSE, by which time outcomes for children have already been affected. Headteachers themselves suggested that it is the least self-aware school leaders who are least likely to seek external challenge and most likely to be susceptible to declining performance. A number of headteachers said that by the time poor performance shows up in results or in an Ofsted inspection “it will be five years too late.” For stand-alone convertor

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Academies, it is not clear whose responsibility it is, other than the governing body's, to monitor a school's performance and identify early signs of decline – but LAs identified sources of information which (in the absence of School Improvement Partners) can be used to gather intelligence about schools, including:

- good ongoing discussions with heads and governors
- schools buying into LA school improvement services or vulnerable children services, and other LA support for back-office functions
- questions and complaints from parents to elected members or officers
- LA governors on governing bodies, including Academies.

The research also identified several 'soft indicators' that can provide an indication of performance at risk, including levels of exclusion, pupils moving to different schools, first preference choices by parents, complaints from parents, staff or residents, and staff turnover, vacancies and sickness levels – but LAs have not frequently mapped these sources of intelligence.

This is an area of continuing uncertainty for LAs, which continue to feel a responsibility for the outcomes of all children in their area, and have a democratic accountability to their communities. The research indicates that LAs find it easier to engage in a dialogue about performance with sponsored academies than with stand-alone convertors (which account for 1430 of the 1928 approved applications to date). LAs expressed frustration about a perceived lack of clarity in how the DfE finds a sponsor for a poorly performing school, the criteria used for selection, how sponsors are to be held to account and the contribution, if any, that the LA is expected to make. Emerging evidence from the action research suggests that the LAs which feel best able to advocate for their local communities in dialogue over a new sponsor are those which are well informed, able to offer a clear and evidence-based view, and are actively engaging with sponsors and school providers on a regular basis.

The case studies offer information about a range of mechanisms and partnerships being developed and implemented by LAs to address these issues, and to secure effective arrangements for school improvement in which they retain a significant role.

## Supporting vulnerable children

Overall, the research suggests that LAs are less confident that, together with schools, they will continue to be able to offer good quality support for the most vulnerable children than they are in their capacity to establish a strategic direction, ensure a sufficient supply of school places or contribute to school improvement. Factors contributing to this include:

- a sharp rise in some LAs in the special educational needs of children and young people
- high levels of mobility in some areas, particularly among children of asylum seeking families and families moving as a result of economic pressures
- difficulties in securing a good school place for every vulnerable child, and in ensuring that every vulnerable child receives the best possible combination of services and support.

LAs retain important responsibilities to manage Fair Access Protocols for the benefit of hard to place children, and ensure the provision of full-time education for pupils excluded from school, so their ability to successfully support, enable and sometimes persuade schools to take decisions for the collective good is crucial. Where Fair Access has not historically been administered successfully schools have disengaged



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from the process, and there is increased anxiety among LAs about whether arrangements will continue to hold strong even where they have historically been effective. It is feared that increased autonomy could lead to more schools failing to take their fair share of students who face multiple challenges, and that the increase in forced academisation of schools at or near the floor targets will increase the reluctance of those schools to accept pupils who might have a negative impact on results. This is potentially compounded by the removal in the new Admissions Code of LAs' responsibility for coordinating in-year admissions, and further complicated by reported concerns about the speed and effectiveness with which disagreements with Academies about such cases are resolved when escalated to the Education Funding Agency.

Difficulties in ensuring the services and support for vulnerable children arise from the change from provision of many such services (eg. education welfare, behaviour support and education psychology) being largely provided free at the point of need, funded from centrally-retained budgets to provision of (and budgets for) non-statutory aspects being largely devolved to schools. A particular concern is the potential impact on vulnerable children of the redistribution of LACSEG (Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant), which evens out the distribution of such funding between Academies without regard to the level of need of their particular pupils. Almost half of the participating LAs did not believe that schools have the skills, confidence or capacity to commission high quality support for vulnerable children, and some did not believe that core traded services for vulnerable children (eg. behaviour services or support for children for whom English is an additional language) will continue to be viable in the short to medium term. The extent to which these concerns were borne out by headteachers engaged in the research was mixed. Many felt very confident in their ability to commission the right support, or that collaboration between schools to make such provision was potentially powerful; but there is evidence that the range of providers may not be as strong as that for school improvement services, with instability caused by a tendency for providers (especially providers of Alternative Provision) to enter and leave the market rapidly. And some schools, particularly primary schools, described a lack of confidence in commissioning such services.

There is also anxiety amongst LAs about the conversion of special schools to Academies, and the location of specialist support units in schools which have converted to Academies; this centred around a potential mismatch arising between provision for special needs locally and the needs of individual children and young people, and LAs' ability (as commissioners for and champions of the most vulnerable) to ensure joined up and coherent services as the diversity of providers and commissioning routes increases.

Again, the case studies illustrate a variety of approaches to meeting these challenges.

## Looking forward

While there is a significant range of interesting activity emerging that may be transferable more widely, most of these approaches are still in their early stages – and the policy landscape and pattern of provision continue to change. The proportion of Academies is increasing both in the secondary and primary sectors, with many LAs expecting all of their secondary schools to be Academies within one or two years, and some actively promoting Academy status in their primary schools; the new Ofsted inspection framework might lead to more schools entering categories of concern, and a possible further surge in the creation of sponsored Academies – and it is likely to lead to some Academies receiving less favourable inspection outcomes; proposed changes in school funding have several implications, including for the commissioning of places for vulnerable children in special schools and other high-needs provision.

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The report concludes that, while the research describes a system still going through a period of significant change, there are a number of key areas where the evidence suggests that action taken now may support a more seamless transition to new and effective ways of working. It lists a number of key messages for local partners in education, and for national partners. These include:

For local partners:

- be systematic in working through, with schools, where the local authority can add most value in the new landscape, prioritise what to focus on and then confidently inhabit the space agreed
- treat schools as partners and leaders in the education system, and provide the space for them to develop solutions to community-wide issues that are owned by schools
- where existing relationships with schools are strong, begin to develop the governance mechanisms and, if appropriate, more formal partnerships with and between schools so that good relationships have a life beyond the particular individuals involved; where relationships with schools are not strong, then take immediate action to turn these around as a matter of priority
- look for quick wins to demonstrably contribute to the resolution of new and pressing issues that are emerging
- focus on co-creating, with schools, a local education culture based on a clear moral purpose and identify the headteacher advocates who can lead that process
- find mechanisms to learn from other local authorities
- develop the capacity to carry out really sharp and high-quality data analysis that will enable schools, parents, and other partners to understand the system-level needs
- work in partnership with local Academies and sponsors to jointly understand what the LA's role as 'a champion of pupils and parents' means
- invest in support for governors overall so that they can add real value to the schools they govern, and strategically target LA governors as a group who can provide a conduit between the LA and Academies
- map and establish systems for regularly scrutinising 'soft' performance indicators available from a range of sources
- develop strong relationships with local Academy sponsors and Free School promoters and maximise local intelligence to become a valued partner in the commissioning dialogue on future school provision
- further develop the outward facing scrutiny role of members so that it becomes a powerful route for championing and advocating on behalf of children and young people
- keep a close watching brief on the sufficiency of support available for vulnerable children both within schools and externally, and the effectiveness with which schools are able to commission that support to meet needs
- identify opportunities to delegate further powers, responsibilities and budgets to schools, within a framework of strong partnership working and robust quality assurance for outcomes.

For national partners:

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- historically, there has been a wide range in LA performance. The extent to which LAs have the skills to adapt to the new agenda successfully is therefore likely to be very varied. Furthermore, the collective capacity of schools in different local areas to assume a system leadership role will also be varied. The Children's Improvement Board (CIB) and sector-led improvement initiatives provide a means for sharing good practice, and the evolving role of the LA in education may be a particular issue on which LAs would welcome greater opportunities to share practice and learn from peers
- in the case of any convertor Academy whose future viability may become uncertain there is no obvious point of accountability in the system to take the difficult decisions about what should happen to that school, and manage the repercussions for neighbouring schools; a similar issue has emerged in relation to the future performance of stand-alone convertor Academies
- in the interests of high quality commissioning and sharing intelligence it would be helpful if the DfE could offer greater clarity on the criteria it uses to assess the suitability of a potential sponsor for a school and how it monitors sponsors' performance; clearer expectations of the role that the DfE would like LAs to play, and how LAs might contribute to the Department's quality assurance of sponsored arrangements may be helpful
- it would be helpful if the DfE could review the existing processes for escalating disputes around Fair Access to the Education Funding Agency to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

## Comment

This is a crucial issue for LAs, and this 100-page report provides much food for thought and many examples of action already being taken; jointly funded by the DfE and the LGA, its findings raise important questions for central and local government (and partners). Together with other recent papers offering different perspectives around the theme of LAs' evolving role (see 'related briefings'), it provides a solid basis for a discussion in which all authorities need to be engaging with some urgency (notwithstanding other matters also requiring their attention); the report identifies the potential role of the CIB in supporting this process.

A [letter](#) sent by the Secretary of State to the Chair of the Education Select Committee in May, following his last appearance before the Committee, gives a good indication of Michael Gove's views then on the need for an 'intermediate tier', the future direction of school improvement and the role played by local authorities. It will be interesting to see how much these views will be modified by the work of the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG), established in 2010 by Mr Gove – which commissioned (and will doubtless be informed by) this research. The MAG membership includes DfE Ministers and officials, and senior representatives (members and officers) of LAs, schools (including Academies), the LGA and ADCS; its [papers](#) provide a lot of information about its work.

## External links

[Action research into the evolving role of the local authority in education – final report](#)

# CSN POLICY BRIEFING

## Related briefings

[The evolving role of the local authority: Local Authority Action Research \(LAAR\) project interim report](#)

[The growth of academy chains: National College for School Leadership report](#)

[The Future Role of Local Authorities in School Improvement](#)

[Schools causing concern](#)

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<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 12 September 2012	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Learning and improvement in children's safeguarding – outcome of Ofsted inspection	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Deputy Director, Specialist Children's Services	

### RECOMMENDATION

1. To note the positive outcome from the inspection of safeguarding and looked after children and actions to address priorities identified for improvement.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Ofsted undertook an inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services between 21 May and 1 June 2012, as part of a national programme. The purpose of the inspection was to evaluate the contribution made by services in the local area towards ensuring that children and young people are properly safeguarded and to determine the quality of service provision for looked after children and care leavers. The inspection found that overall effectiveness of safeguarding services was good with capacity for improvement as outstanding. Services for looked after children were judged overall as good, with good capacity for improvement.
3. The report was published on the Ofsted website on 10 July 2012 and is included as appendix 1. Actions to address all areas identified for improvement are being implemented and progress is being monitored by the SSCB.
4. This report is set in the context of partnership working between children's social care, the Southwark Safeguarding Children's Board (SSCB), the Southwark Children's and Families Trust (SCFT) and the shadow Health and Wellbeing Board.
5. It is also set in the context of the draft SSCB annual report, which was presented to the scrutiny sub-committee on 23 April 2012 for comment. As a result of this consultation with key partners, a final draft is being compiled for presentation to the SSCB executive board on 25 September. The actions identified through this report will be taken forward alongside the inspection outcomes by the SSCB over the coming year.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

6. The outcomes of the inspection are as follows:

### Safeguarding services

Overall effectiveness	Good
Capacity for improvement	Outstanding
Children and young people are safe and feel safe	Good
Quality of provision	Good
The contribution of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe	Good
Ambition and prioritisation	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Performance management and quality assurance	Good
Partnership working	Good
Equality and diversity	Good

### Services for looked after children

Overall effectiveness	Good
Capacity for improvement	Good
Being healthy	Good
Staying safe	Good
Enjoying and achieving	Good
Making a positive contribution, including user engagement	Outstanding
Economic well-being	Adequate
Quality of provision	Good
Ambition and prioritisation	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Performance management and quality assurance	Good
Equality and diversity	Good

### Overview of key themes

7. The inspectors highlighted the solid and continuous progress of the council and its partners in identifying, driving and monitoring key improvements in targeted services for children and young people. The SCFT and SSCB were praised for their effective, well-articulated vision and ambition for supporting vulnerable children, as was the scrutiny sub-committee. The council and partners' ambitious and effective leadership, including strong support and challenge from members and the cabinet member for children's services as well as the corporate parenting committee, were also singled out as strong.
8. The inspection found strong capacity to improve, with the council maintaining the necessary capacity and investment in its corporate parenting responsibilities, which has led to sustained performance in outcomes for children. There was praise for the drive to extend and enhance prevention and early intervention services, and to the range of services on offer to children and young people on the edge of care. The inspectors also found effective arrangements for commissioning and procuring services based on a good analysis of current and forthcoming need; as well as for performance management, quality assurance and partnership working. The inspectors highlighted in particular the strong partnerships with schools and the voluntary sector, although they noted the reduced levels of participation from academies.

9. The inspectors highlighted the contribution of Speakerbox (the Children in Care Council) noting it is excellent, with a well-embedded commitment by services to engage the views of looked after children. The inspector also found good arrangements are in place to promote the outcomes of looked after children, noting that those to enable them to make a positive contribution are outstanding. Overall the quality of direct work with children was found to be good and child centred, and the inspectors found evidence of very sensitive and considered interventions with children and young people.

#### **Future work programme implications**

10. Progress in implementing actions in the areas identified for improvement in both the inspection and through the SSCB annual report are overseen by the SSCB executive board. The action, for example, to promote engagement of faith and minority ethnic groups is being taken forward through a 'strategic breakfast' planned for this autumn, at which key stakeholders from faith and ethnic minority communities will come together to plan a way forward for meaningful engagement.
11. The SSCB's highly valued training programme is being reviewed and refreshed to ensure it continues to provide quality learning opportunities that meet the multi-agency needs of partners across the borough. Work is underway to develop packages that respond to new issues such as honour-based violence and child trafficking, to ensure that practitioners are supported and able to respond to developing issues. Other potential areas for future scrutiny include the changing relationship between academies and the council.

#### **Policy implications**

12. The areas for development identified in the inspection are consistent with local strategic frameworks including the Children and Young People's Plan, the Council Plan and the Southwark Safeguarding Children Board.

#### **Community impact statement**

13. This report seeks to communicate the strengths and areas for improvement assessed through inspection, thus, impact on the community is minimal. However, the corresponding action to be developed will contain activities which will seek to make Southwark safer and improve outcomes for vulnerable children, looked after children and care leavers. The actions going forward to address areas for improvement will be monitored to ensure these activities do not have adverse community impacts going forward.
14. It is anticipated that the actions to take forward the inspection areas of development will be achieved within existing resources.

#### **Legal and Financial implications**

15. There are no legal or financial implications arising from this report.

**APPENDICES**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>
Appendix 1	Ofsted Southwark Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Report

**AUDIT TRAIL**

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Rory Patterson, Deputy Director, Specialist Children's Services	
<b>Report Author</b>	Ann Flynn, Development Manager Safeguarding Board	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	31 August 2012	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Director of Legal Services	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Scrutiny Team</b>	4 September 2012	





# Inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services

London Borough of Southwark

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**Inspection dates:** 21 May – 1 June 2012  
**Reporting inspector:** Brendan Parkinson HMI

**Age group:** All  
**Published:** 10 July 2012

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## About this inspection

1. The purpose of the inspection is to evaluate the contribution made by relevant services in the local area towards ensuring that children and young people are properly safeguarded and to determine the quality of service provision for looked after children and care leavers. The inspection team consisted of three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one inspector from the Care Quality Commission. The inspection was carried out under the Children Act 2004.
2. The evidence evaluated by inspectors included:
  - discussions with children and young people receiving services, front line staff and managers, senior officers including the Director of Children's Services and the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, elected members and a range of community representatives
  - analysing and evaluating reports from a variety of sources including a review of the Children and Young People's Plan, performance data, information from the inspection of local settings, such as schools and day care provision and the evaluations of a serious case review undertaken by Ofsted in accordance with *'Working Together To Safeguard Children'*, 2010
  - a review of 52 case files for children and young people with a range of need. This provided a view of services provided over time and the quality of reporting, recording and decision making undertaken
  - the outcomes of the most recent annual unannounced inspection of local authority contact, referral and assessment services undertaken in 2 March 2011
  - interviews and focus groups with front line professionals, managers and senior staff from Southwark NHS Primary Care Trust, Guy's and St Thomas' Foundation Hospital and Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, South London and Maudsley NHS Trust and the Community Health South London NHS Trust.

## The inspection judgements and what they mean

3. All inspection judgements are made using the following four point scale.

Outstanding (Grade 1)	A service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements
Good (Grade 2)	A service that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate (Grade 3)	A service that only meets minimum requirements
Inadequate (Grade 4)	A service that does not meet minimum requirements

## Service information

4. Southwark has a resident population of approximately 61,600 children and young people aged 0 to 19, representing about 21% of the total population of the area. In January 2012, 78.7% of the school population was classified as belonging to an ethnic group other than White British compared to 22.5% in England overall; 43.4% of pupils speak English as an additional language. Yoruba (5.9%) and Spanish (3.0%) are the most recorded commonly spoken community languages in the area. Some 12.8% of pupils are of Nigerian background.
5. Southwark has 91 schools comprising 68 primary schools, 15 secondary schools, one all-through school, and seven special and short stay schools. Secondary provision is largely made up of schools with academy status. Early years service provision is delivered predominantly through the private and voluntary sector in over 90 settings; there are five local authority maintained nurseries.
6. The Southwark Children and Families Trust (SCFT) was set up in 2004. The Trust includes representatives of the London Borough of Southwark and Southwark Primary Care Trust services. Other representatives include the Metropolitan Police, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, Southwark Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB), Southwark Youth Council and representatives of local schools and colleges. The SSCB has been independently chaired since October 2009, and brings together the main organisations working with children, young people and families in the area that provide safeguarding services.
7. Social care services for children have 207 foster carers, no local authority children's homes and 56 externally commissioned services. Community-based children's services are provided by a single referral and assessment team and five family support teams, supported by authority-wide teams for youth offending, adoption and fostering and teams for looked after children and young people leaving care. There is an emergency out of hours service providing cover for Southwark. Other family support services are delivered through 18 children's centres and extended services in schools. Some services are provided or coordinated through children's services such as children's centres, pupil referral units and youth provision.
8. At the time of the inspection there were 546 looked after children. They comprise 121 children less than five years of age, 332 children of statutory school age and 93 post-16 young people. In addition, there are a total of

363 young people with care leaver status. Southwark uses a virtual school approach in its support of the learning of looked after children.

9. At the time of the inspection there were 281 children who were the subject of a child protection plan. These comprise 126 females and 150 males (six were unborn children). Some 42% of these children are aged under five, 36% are 5-11 and 20% are 12 years or older. The highest categories of registration were neglect at 37% and emotional abuse at 17%, neglect and emotional abuse at 17% and emotional and physical abuse at 11%.
10. Commissioning and planning of health services and primary care are carried out by Southwark NHS Primary Care Trust (PCT). The main providers of acute hospital services are Guy's and St Thomas' Foundation Hospital and Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. Community-based child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), including in-patient, are provided by South London and Maudsley NHS Trust. South London NHS Trust provides a range of children's community health services.

## Safeguarding services

### Overall effectiveness

### Grade 2 (Good)

11. The overall effectiveness of safeguarding services is good. The London Borough of Southwark, health organisations and other key partners have continued to make solid and continuous progress in identifying, driving and monitoring key improvements in targeted services for children and young people. The Southwark Children and Families Trust (SCFT) and Southwark Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) have been effective in presenting well articulated ambitions for vulnerable children. The outcome has been a strong foundation upon which further improvements can be pursued. Priorities are coherent and successfully acted upon, for example with the sustained improvements in rates of teenage pregnancy. Children's services have been fully engaged and continue to play a particularly vigorous role in advancing and promoting the well articulated improvement agenda. Challenge and support are provided in appropriate measure within both arrangements. The monitoring and evaluation of performance are well established, although qualitative measures and more extensive evaluations of the impact of services are recognised as requiring further development. Reporting by agencies other than the local authority would contribute to these improvements.
12. The local authority arrangements for overview, scrutiny and the championing of vulnerable children within the borough are strongly evidenced. There is a well established and improving commissioning culture with ambitious, realistic and clear approaches to, for example, a revised framework for, and improved multi-disciplinary approach to, early intervention services. Long-standing, mature professional relationships between all key partner agencies have not inhibited the area from seeking further learning and establishing strategic and operational links with academic institutions and other local authorities outside of the borough. These are aimed towards the further development of evidence based professional practices and more effective ways of working.
13. Children's services, and particularly the specialist children's social care service, have achieved and maintained compliance in the delivery of the core services for the protection of children. This has been well supported by partner agencies. The local authority has established and maintained workforce stability in the children's social care following an earlier period of turbulence. However, further anticipated turnover will require careful risk management to ensure the sustainability of the currently positive situation. At an operational level there is much sound, active and timely engagement between agencies, particularly evident for those children most in need of protection.

14. Children most in need of protection and safeguarding are identified and, while inspectors sought and obtained clarification in relation to some cases, no child was referred for urgent action during the course of the inspection. However, the quality of analysis in assessments remains variable. The detailed changes required in parenting within protection plans are not always of a sufficiently high standard. The out of hours arrangements of the local authority are robust and responsive, with constructive relationships with key partner agencies, notably police and health, as well as the daytime services. Performance in almost all key areas has shown maintenance or improvement compared to statistical neighbours. Recent improvements are noted in the robustness of assessments of 'good enough' parenting. However, further improvement is required, particularly in addressing the entrenched needs of some children which had previously not been fully assessed or addressed, for example those experiencing two or more episodes with a child protection plan.
15. The necessary quality assurance arrangements are in place, including case auditing, within social care. A more strategic approach is needed in the reporting framework to the SSCB, with a clearer trail of evidence of audit findings informing service delivery, contributing to planning and consequent commissioning activity. Operational managers and reviewing officers provide effective oversight on an individual case basis, although consistency of performance and ensuring a sustained focus on the timely, evidence-based implementation of plans is yet to be fully achieved. Lines of accountability are clear for practitioners, and those in social care services express positive regard for their managers. Safeguarding policies and procedures are appropriate, with local authority and partner agencies staff, including the voluntary and community sector, having good access to valued training.
16. Extensive improvements within, and additions to, the duty and assessment services have been made, although these require consolidation prior to the development and implementation of yet further ambitious plans. The views of children, parents and carers are routinely sought with some examples of high quality relationship building and communication, although there continues to be some inconsistency in achieving their full involvement. Parents spoken with during the inspection had variable views about services received, but were unfailingly positive about their current engagement and relationships with professionals. The ethnicity and communication needs of children and families are also accurately identified although the impact, strengths and needs of culture, faith and diversity are not always fully evaluated within assessments and plans.
17. Partnership activity involving use of the common assessment framework (CAF) was revised in 2011, with evidence of recent, much needed, improvement. This needs to be sustained and further extended across all agencies, to achieve further improved clarity around thresholds between child in need and for those eligible for early help. Strong continuing



support for children is delivered by children's centres and schools as well as from primary health services. Some primary health settings, for example health visiting and school nursing, have limited capacity. A reduced level of active partnership working has also been noted with a number of academy schools in the borough.

## Capacity for improvement

## Grade 1 (Outstanding)

18. The capacity for improvement is outstanding. The pace and focus of service improvement is strong and all key partner agencies understand, and are committed to, further improvements. A firm platform for partnership and challenge has been established through refreshed strategic frameworks, governance arrangements and strategic and business plans of the two key mechanisms for driving and monitoring service improvement: the Southwark Children and Young People's Plan (SCYPP) and Southwark Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB). There has been extensive activity to achieve a thorough understanding of need and demand within the area which is characterised by extremes of prosperity and a wide range of diverse cultural and ethnic communities. The revised joint strategic needs analysis has been well used to support these efforts.
19. The areas for improvement identified in previous unannounced inspections have been addressed effectively. Capacity in children's social care referral and assessment and family support services, as well as through the sustained investment and commitment to early help services, is sufficient to meet current levels of need and risk. The currently stable and developing workforce in social care present with manageable workloads with a sufficient managerial span of control to ensure effective oversight of work and support for practitioners. There is strong local authority and partner agency support for the safeguarding and protection agenda for all children. Notable in this has been a sustained and improving engagement with the voluntary and community sector in the area. This has been achieved through ensuring a full understanding of, and engagement by, service commissioning, the provision of training and in an improved procurement, contracting and monitoring of provided services. However, the needs of areas of persistent and intense deprivation and the impact of the national and regional economic context continue to present serious service challenges for all partner agencies.
20. An additional improved focus on performance in specific areas of service, including domestic abuse and youth offending, has been achieved. Improvements, or maintenance, have been achieved and sustained across a range of indicators of timeliness of assessments and reviews, as well as in bringing the ratio of core assessments more in line with similar authorities. However, some performance areas have yet to see even further improvement – for example, children with repeat child protection plans and timescales from child protection enquiries to initial child protection conference. The use of data and other performance monitoring

systems and arrangements support managers at all levels, with quality assurance information also embedded through the use of practice audit, although a stronger focus on qualitative measures is recognised as being required in order to increase their value further.

## Areas for improvement

21. In order to improve the quality of provision and services for safeguarding children and young people in the London Borough of Southwark the local authority and its partners should take the following action.

### Immediately:

- ensure arrangements for proceeding from child protection enquiries to initial conference are compliant with statutory guidance. This includes the revision of current policy and communicating changes effectively to partner agencies
- Southwark NHS Primary Care Trust, Guy's and St Thomas' Foundation Hospital and Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust to ensure robust arrangements are in place to identify and communicate concerns about children who are at risk or in need of protection and are effective.

### Within three months:

- ensure that those children previously subject to a child protection plan or who have been on a plan for between one and two years are reviewed to ensure that drift or delays in improving their protection are addressed
- ensure that social care fully implement their duties in seeking orders to protect children, limiting the exercise of powers of police protection to exceptional circumstances, where there is an imminent threat to the child's welfare
- improve the quality of child protection plans to ensure that all agencies focus on the outcomes for the child and timescales are explicit
- The SSCB should:
  - establish a reporting framework to ensure regular reports on multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC), multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA), domestic abuse, electively home educated children and the safeguarding of looked after children are robustly considered by the board;
  - include effective representations from minority ethnic and faith groups; and

- establish effective mechanisms to consider the qualitative information held by child protection conference chairs.
- ensure thresholds for early help and targeted child in need services are clear, agreed and effectively communicated across partner agencies in the area
- ensure the social care arrangements for receiving and handling contacts and referrals avoid repetition by, or unnecessary duplication of, efforts with referrers
- Southwark NHS Primary Care Trust and South London NHS Trust to ensure sufficient capacity to deliver in full the healthy child programme, including take up of the child immunisation programme, is maximised, and the commissioned core offer in school nursing is delivered in full.

**Within six months:**

- ensure sufficient services are in place that support men in developing their parenting skills and to ensure that their violent behaviour within domestic abuse situations are more effectively addressed.

## Safeguarding outcomes for children and young people

### Children and young people are safe and feel safe

#### Grade 2 (Good)

22. Safeguarding outcomes for children and young people are good. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) role is discharged effectively with appropriate levels of reporting from schools, early years and foster carers although lower than anticipated levels from the police, health and the voluntary sector. An effective local authority complaints procedure has resulted in a number of improvements to social care practices but there is variable awareness amongst service users of how to complain. Processes are in place to ensure safe recruitment meet statutory requirements amongst key partner agencies, including the voluntary and community sector.
23. When safeguarding and child protection concerns are identified, they are responded to promptly and allocated to qualified and experienced social workers. In most cases seen, effective work is undertaken to ensure the safety of children, and more recently, previous drift and delay has been addressed with more assertive interventions. While support for privately fostered children has improved following a recent audit and is now sound, the number of those children has fallen despite active promotion and awareness-raising. There are also valued commissioned services for young carers in the borough, providing a balance of valued support and activity for some young carers, although the numbers are relatively small compared to the prevalence within the area. Most, but not all, feel understood within their schools. However, they consider that they are currently being expected to undertake greater levels of caring, perceiving a diminishing level of support for the person they care for; usually a parent.
24. The overall quality of school provision for children and young people in the area is good. Educational outcomes have improved rapidly and are at least in line with similar areas and the national average at all Key Stages. Achievement for children from low-income families is above that found nationally. There have been no permanent exclusions from primary schools for two years. The development of pupil development centres, supported by outreach workers from the pupil referral unit, has been effective in reducing exclusions in primary schools. Both fixed term and permanent exclusions are reducing at secondary schools. However, academies account for 75% of all permanent exclusions with one academy accounting for almost half of all fixed term exclusions. Sustained efforts continue to be made to ensure all academies are fully engaged in the early help agenda. Almost all settings for learning and childcare are judged by Ofsted as good or better for staying safe.

25. Arrangements to identify and support parents and children who suffer domestic abuse are satisfactory. The Southwark Violent Crime Strategy 2011-2015 highlights the need to deliver a healthy and respectful relationship campaign in schools and work closely with a range of other partnership bodies, including safeguarding boards, to improve understanding of child protection, honour based violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage and human trafficking. Work with professionals in schools, health and the police has led to good recognition of domestic abuse. Community based ante-natal services ensure that vulnerable pregnant women are identified and pre-birth plans for their baby put in place. Following a review of domestic abuse arrangements in the borough, services have recently been rationalised and contracted from a new provider to meet the therapeutic and support needs of adults and children. There is refuge provision in the borough, however, this does not accept the teenage sons of women, and some young males are placed in bed and breakfast or supported accommodation which is not best child centred practice.
26. Multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) arrangements have been recently improved and are now a fully effective part of the coordinated community response to domestic abuse, providing a mechanism to address the risk and increase the safety of victims and their children. Most referrals are from a good range of agencies in the area and individual safeguarding plans are successfully delivered by the contribution of all agencies involved. Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) for managing violent offenders are effectively overseen and managed through sustained agency engagement.
27. There are sound arrangements in place to identify children missing from home, care or education, as well as to review those who are frequently missing or missing for a protracted period. All young people, including those placed outside the borough, who return from being missing, as well as being seen for a 'safe and well' check by the police, are offered a range of people to undertake a more detailed return interview. The council has recently also recruited volunteers to contact children who go missing from home and about whom there are no safeguarding issues. While there is a protocol for children missing from home, school and care, this does not include children missing from health services. However, this has been identified by the SSCB and is being addressed. The vulnerability of missing children to sexual exploitation is well understood and effectively overseen by a regular multi-agency sexual exploitation panel arrangement.

## Quality of provision

## Grade 2 (Good)

28. The quality of provision for safeguarding children and young people in the London Borough of Southwark is good. The drive toward extending and enhancing prevention and early intervention services is a high priority. By the time of the inspection an increased understanding and engagement by

universal and targeted support agencies had been achieved. Particular strengths were noted in the commitment to the planned multi-disciplinary community based model of help using children's centres as a hub of support. A strategic multi-agency approach, championed by the SCFT is leading to the development of clear, consistent and effective arrangements for early help. Children's centres and schools identify early positive impact on both professionals and families and welcome the single front door approach. Work continues to roll out training and ensure full consistency, embracing all relevant referral systems. There is increasing confidence in, and use of, the CAF which is being used flexibly as a child in need referral, for multi-agency information gathering and as an assessment tool. However, the quality of CAFs is variable and some parents are currently working with the local authority on staff training to improve the reflection of their views in assessments. Effective 'team around the child' meetings are demonstrating some good improvement in outcomes.

29. Referrals from agencies for early intervention, preventative and child in need assessments and services come through a single reception and duty point of the social care service, but are passed through a number of stages, not all of which are effectively synchronised and recorded in the most efficient way. These arrangements have positively contributed to an almost 23% reduction in contacts received by the referral and assessment service during 2011-2012. Additional contributions to this have been made by the co-location of other specialist roles including housing support and assessments for 16+ homeless and vulnerable young people, those with no recourse to public funds and an initial 'triage' system for police notifications. Integrated child support service (ICSS) arrangements targeting health specialist and midwifery support are also in place, providing high quality information and contributions to assessments of unborn children. Schools also receive valued support from the education safeguarding team which ensures higher levels of practice confidence, although more work is required to ensure there is a clear understanding of thresholds. The effective work of the education welfare service and pupil referral units are also highly valued by parents and professionals.
30. Thresholds for child protection referrals are appropriate and work is allocated to qualified and experienced social workers with appropriate prioritisation and timely responses being undertaken. However, the exercise of powers of police protection for children seen as in urgent need of protection at times take place in circumstances where social care could have sought orders for the emergency protection of children in a more timely way. Those child protection enquiries undertaken by children's social care are prioritised and children are seen promptly and frequently. Strategy discussions take place in a timely and focused way, although a policy of conducting two strategy meetings does not meet statutory guidance, creating too long a gap before a multi-agency child protection plan can be agreed. There are constructive and effective approaches

bringing together potentially disparate agencies through the use of multi-agency panels for early help as well as other resource panels and legal advice/gateway meetings for cases entering the public law outline.

31. The quality of social work assessments is variable, and while some fully consider all domains and previous history and conclude with a sound analysis of risk and protective factors, others give insufficient consideration to the reasons for previous lack of improvement and are over-optimistic about the capacity of parents to change. Social workers show a strong commitment to capturing the views of children using a range of resources to elicit their views, with detailed descriptions provided. Several cases seen during the inspection show recent evidence of more decisive activity by professionals. However, in some assessments insufficient analysis of the impact of their circumstances is evidenced and, although some diversity issues are addressed others are not always sufficiently explicit. Some assessments are also significantly overdue in being produced. Whilst the council evidence that most social work reports to child protection conferences are shared with parents prior to the conference, parents seen during this inspection did not support this view.
32. Performance, at 100%, in relation to the timeliness of review conferences is excellent with a very high level of attendance and good participation by most agencies. However, the lower attendance by academy school staff and GPs is of concern. Conferences are well chaired by independent, experienced managers who have sufficient capacity to maintain an overview of work, provide consultation and undertake some quality assurance functions. Child protection plans do address risk but do not always focus on specific outcomes within identified timescales. Reductions in those children subject to plans after being on a plan for two or more years are now being achieved.
33. Second or subsequent child protection plans have increased and is an area appropriately kept under review by children's services, as are the numbers of children ceasing child protection plans within three months of them being made. Core groups meet regularly with a good level of attendance and children are seen frequently by a range of professionals. There is effective monitoring of statutory visiting, recognising the significance this can have in terms of risk. The recording systems within social care do not sufficiently enable staff to ensure it is thorough and timely, although much work is put into achieving this. This is recognised by senior managers who are planning to commission the necessary changes.

### **The contribution of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe** **Grade 2 (Good)**

34. The contribution of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe is good. A long history of partnership working is highly successful in

meeting local challenges. Child death overview arrangements are in place and inform the work programme of the SSCB, and have received additional resourcing to address a small backlog of work. Board assurance in safeguarding children is of good quality, supported by clear governance structures. Very good progress has been made in ensuring that staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding in all but one trust (Kings College Hospital) where there has been poor progress since a review in 2010. Good use is made of internal audit to ensure staff remain focused on safeguarding children. Designated professional arrangements are mostly good with effective leadership provided within the area. Awareness about safeguarding and child protection within primary care is improving although monitoring of the arrangements is not yet fully in place. Named leads are identified in each GP practice but the arrangements are yet to be formalised.

35. Participation in child protection arrangements receives high priority in universal services and highly effective arrangements are in place for child protection medicals. Well established processes in A&E departments support effective safeguarding practice and are to be improved further by updated systems. Arrangements for addressing any safeguarding concerns for children at the walk in centre are discussed with social care, although they operate with a stand alone database. A sexual assault referral centre is based in Kings College Hospital providing a 24 hour service to victims of assault. Delivery of the full healthy child programme is stretched due to recognised capacity difficulties of community practitioners within some parts of the borough. Health visiting capacity is challenging, adversely impacting on the timeliness of key ante- and post-natal checks, including the target to visit all infants within 10-14 days.
36. Midwives have clear and effective processes in place to identify vulnerabilities in women when booking their pregnancies and in subsequent risk assessments. Appropriate priority is given to the delivery of ante-natal care of vulnerable women, although a recent audit found that only a third of appointments were taken up by the expectant mothers. Very good arrangements support women who require peri-natal mental health support, or have drug and alcohol misuse habits. Teenage mothers to be have timely access to effective health support, although specific arrangements to support young fathers to be are not effectively in place. While the rate amongst those under 16 years continues to present challenges, good progress has been made in reducing the previously very high rate of teenage pregnancy generally, with a decrease of 39% compared to the national fall of 24% in the relevant period.
37. In relation to prevention and early help, the contraceptive and sexual health service has five bases providing six day per week access. While there are plans to extend some opening hours these do not include plans to operate over the whole week. Insight provides an effective programme of education and support for substance misusing young people up to 24



years of age. Families also have access to a good range of CAMHS provision, although waiting times for assessments are too long, at three to four months on average. A triage system is in place to prioritise, with some excellent work taking place at short notice demonstrating a very good level of awareness of the potential impact of parents' mental health on children. Families have access to effective therapy services to support children and young people. Arrangements are also in place, through a multi-agency panel, to coordinate the care of children with complex needs during their transition to adult services, including ensuring that their well-being is safeguarded.

## **Ambition and prioritisation**

## **Grade 1 (Outstanding)**

38. Ambition and prioritisation of safeguarding services are outstanding. The local authority and its partners provide sustained, ambitious and effective leadership. There is a clear and substantial drive, from the lead elected member and others in the council, in supporting and challenging performance as well as in improving services for all vulnerable children. Most areas for development, including many identified within this inspection are fully understood with consequent clear and appropriately resourced responses made by the local authority and partners in a well coordinated way. The determination to sustain capacity for early help has provided an excellent cornerstone of service capacity, around which the strategy for extending early help has been built. The extensive anti-poverty agenda and consequent additional services, through the extension of free school meal provision for example, has provided a substantial and robust platform upon which the targeted services are able to build further improvements with confidence.
39. Mature, productive relationships between agencies are maintained by senior officers who have a good knowledge of local need, pressures and improvement opportunities. Priorities, based on analysis of local need, are set out clearly in strategic, business and action plans and are proportionately understood by staff that inspectors spoke with during the inspection. Successful coordination and promotion of partnership services toward the most vulnerable have been led and promoted by the range of partnership boards, and through the SCFT in particular. The SCFT, shadow health and well-being arrangements and other key strategies, notably through the Safer Southwark Partnership, undertake highly effective work in coordinating and driving service improvements. This is exemplified by the sustained and thorough strategies and action around gangs and violent youth crime within the borough, as well as in the formulation of strategies within the troubled families' approaches under consideration, nationally as well as locally.

**Leadership and management****Grade 2 (Good)**

40. Leadership and management of safeguarding services are good. The workforce strategy of children's services has been successful and well implemented, achieving a significant level of staffing stability through bold actions designed to attract and retain high calibre social workers, a substantial proportion of who are from different parts of the world. Following a period of stability, the number of agency staff and staff turnover has increased slightly and is likely to continue to do so, though these changes are recognised and are being actively addressed. While the diversity of the workforce does reflect the demography of the locality, this is not so at all levels of the local authority, particularly at the most senior levels of management.
41. Social work case loads are manageable and newly qualified staff are appropriately protected, supported and developed. Social work managers at all levels and social workers have high morale, valuing the training offered and received. They specifically value the support of their colleagues and their own managers, to whom they have frequent access and from whom they receive regular supervision and appraisal. Managers are seen as child centred and knowledgeable, although several practitioners commented on the delays resulting when seeking certain decisions, due to the required agreements from a number of managers. Social workers present as clearly committed to the professional task, but experience considerable challenges in balancing the need to meet performance requirements and undertake effective reflective and direct work with children, in large part due to the demands of the recording systems.
42. The council has a sound understanding, based on analysis of needs, of service and resource deficits and develops services to address these with effective commissioning. The local authority and its partners have a strong commitment to using the views and experiences of children, young people and their families to inform service development, including a broad range of early help services. For example parents are involved in quality assuring the effectiveness of the CAF. Valued amongst the commissioned services are the pre-birth team, family intervention project, CAMHS and the many children's centres. Together with the involvement of schools and health visitors these deliver good quality, sustained support to individual families, added to which the early help services are being further developed. However, there is a lack of programmes to support fathers in developing their parenting skills and a lack of therapeutic services to address violent behaviour by men in domestic abuse situations.

## Performance management and quality assurance

### Grade 2 (Good)

43. Performance management and quality assurance are good, with sustained improvement across a wide range of national and local indicators identified for improvement in at least the recent period. Performance reporting and monitoring are in place, which capture an extensive range of data, although qualitative aspects to supplement statistical information has, to date, been limited. The council is aware of this and is considering how best to add depth to the understanding of need and evaluations of performance in an efficient and effective way. A 'dashboard' approach has been used to some considerable effect with some service areas seen as in need of improvement, for example when reviewing the range of services for those parents of children who experience domestic abuse.
44. A range of quality assurance and audit mechanisms are in place within children's social care, and the SSCB has undertaken a number of multi-agency audits. An outline revised performance management and quality assurance framework has recently been agreed by the Board but is yet to be fully implemented. This will need to incorporate review audits of activity in which planned improvements are anticipated following, for example, learning from management reviews or serious case reviews. The contribution of the social work improvement and quality assurance framework is designed to contribute significantly to this work. However, the extensive and qualitative information about practice held by child protection conference chairs is not fully used to contribute to the SSCB's fullest understanding of practice.
45. Performance is robustly monitored by operational, senior and strategic managers and compares well with similar authorities. Professional lines of accountability are clear within agencies with well regarded and effectively used liaison and dispute escalation arrangements. Practitioners clearly value the support, knowledge and accessibility of all managers, describing Southwark as a "safe place in which to work". Managers are evidently child centred and constantly seek to improve practice through a variety of research based mechanisms. The further development toward use of a signs of safety approach is seen as a welcome further development. Thresholds are well understood and are consistently applied to child protection concerns, but are less clear or felt to be consistently applied to the interface between early help and other children in need, and are in need of revision and promotion with and between the key partner agencies.

## Partnership working

### Grade 2 (Good)

46. Partnership working is good with effective work seen across the statutory and voluntary and community sectors, as well as at strategic and operational levels. A long history of effective partnership working, and

increasingly with the voluntary and community sector, has been established through the SCFT. Extensive strategic 'conversations' take place on a continuous basis between senior officers and members across the partnership. These conversations have included significant contributions by service users and other members of the public, through the powerful "1,000 Voices" contribution to the current Children and Young People's Plan. These currently operate on choices within the limitations imposed by current resource constraints. Current substantive issues under consideration are entirely appropriate, and include strategies to counteract gangs, early intervention (notably in relation to the hub approach based on children's centres), developing voluntary sector capacity further, re-engaging relationships with academy schools, establishing an effective agenda within the shadow health and well-being board, improving the education, employment and training commitment to those leaving care, and ensuring that the voices of children and parents continue to be effectively heard.

47. The SSCB is led by a respected independent chair, and has appropriate membership including recently appointed lay members, although it does not have representation from faith or other minority ethnic groups that reflect the diversity of the borough's population. The board comprises a wide range of members. Children's social care managers chair the majority of sub-groups that undertake much of the work, and in particular the audit and learning group, providing a disproportionate representation of these groups.
48. The priorities of the board focus on child protection and are appropriately developed from a balance of learning from serious case reviews as well as from performance information. However, the links to domestic abuse services are insufficiently robust and a comprehensive reporting framework for functions such as MARAC and MAPPA is not sufficiently well established. Widely available and valued child protection training is provided and is both free and accessible to the voluntary sector. This includes lessons learned from local and national serious case and other management reviews. There has, however, been no scrutiny of some vulnerable groups, for example considering the safeguarding needs of looked after children or those of electively home educated children, and the participation of children with the SSCB is not yet formalised.

## Services for looked after children

### Overall effectiveness

### Grade 2 (Good)

49. The overall effectiveness of services for looked after children is good. The local authority and its partners present as effective corporate parents with looked after children well established as a clear priority for members of the SCFT. There is a well embedded and improving commissioning culture with revised procurement arrangements for achieving bespoke, higher value placements through, for example, increasingly effective regional consortia arrangements. Statutory functions and core requirements are being met and no services are deteriorating in relation to looked after children. Adequate and often better outcomes for most looked after children are achieved, and across almost all aspects of the relevant outcome areas. These are sustained as the consequence of mature, effective operational partner agency relationships, including the valued virtual school approach. Notably positive among those supports provided are those delivered through the looked after CAMHS provision.
50. Corporate parenting arrangements are mature, exhibiting a very strong commitment to, and championing the needs of, looked after children. The contribution of Speaker Box presents as an excellent and well embedded commitment to fully engaging with the views of many looked after children and makes a powerful and positive impact on resources and services in the area. Front line long-term workforce stability in children's social care for looked after children has been effectively maintained without experiencing the staffing disruption seen elsewhere. Organisational arrangements within social care are acknowledged as not enabling sufficient consistency or continuity for children due to having several points where case transfer can take place. Staff work hard to minimise any disruption, but such transfer points can and do impact upon the development of positive relationships and in sustaining the pace of implementation of plans.
51. Those looked after children seen, or whose case files were considered, during the inspection, had been subject to appropriate decision making and needed to be in the care of the local authority. Some children within public law proceedings were subject to delays in achieving final outcomes consequent to additional commissioned assessments or alternative interim orders to those sought by the local authority. Most children in care and those receiving leaving care services seen, as well as those responding to a survey during the inspection, reported feeling safe, or very safe, where they live. Improvements in educational attainment have been sustained, although tracking and monitoring of progress is currently incomplete. Success has also been achieved recently in reducing the numbers of looked after children entering the criminal justice system, following extensive work with the youth offending service.

52. The extensive arrangements for looked after children to express their views about the service they receive are a particular strength. However, although some plans for children, particularly those within family court settings, are of high quality, care plans more generally are not always clearly articulated, with an absence of substantive or sufficiently evidenced contingency arrangements. Examples were seen during the inspection of sensitive and thoughtful work in ensuring that the needs of children from a range of backgrounds, ethnicities and abilities receive parenting commensurate with identified need.
53. There remain high numbers of children living outside the local authority area, although most live within close proximity of the borough. There were good reasons for the placements of those who live some way from their home. There are effective health services for children, notably around support for their mental and emotional health needs, although improvements are needed to ensure that the physical health needs of all looked after children are being met, and that engagement with older young people and planning for their adult lives takes place from an earlier point. Transition planning has been recognised as requiring improvement, and there are widely varying views about the support provided for those young people preparing for or leaving care. Some have felt insufficiently well prepared or supported towards independence during the latter period of being looked after.

## **Capacity for improvement**

## **Grade 2 (Good)**

54. The capacity for improvement is good. Statutory requirements are met with an exceptionally strong current performance for placement stability of those children looked after for lengthy periods, and a wide range of sustained or improving outcomes for most children, albeit set against a sustained rise in numbers becoming looked after until the very recent period. The local authority has maintained the necessary capacity and investment in its corporate parenting responsibilities. This has enabled children's services to keep a sustained performance in outcomes for almost all children. A strong partnership approach with key partner agencies has extended this commitment well ensuring a strong performance across most outcome measures. The SCFT prioritises looked after children as a key group of children needing to be supported in a coordinated way, particularly in achieving their full potential.
55. The local authority has undertaken a thorough analysis of the profile of the service as well as developing detailed, thorough plans to address the range of challenges; financial, procurement and the recruitment of local carers. It has a clear understanding of needs and risks, although some children have arrived in care later than they might have done and others are faced with considerable uncertainties during their passage through legal proceedings. Identified commitments to the prevention of children

becoming looked after have resulted in greater resourcing levels being recently applied, particularly to parenting support and intensive interventions with older children. It is too early for clear outcomes of this strategy to be realised, particularly around reducing the higher numbers becoming looked after in the area compared to like authorities.

56. Consultation and engagement with children and young people looked after is extensive and of a very high quality, actively contributing to a number of improvements in how care is experienced. Speaker Box and its range of activities presents the authentic voice of the child in care, is very influential, impacting across a wide range of issues. Reviewing officers prioritise contact with children they are responsible for, seeking to establish a meaningful relationship according to the age and capacity of the child. Most parents experience effective working relationships with the local authority towards achieving the best outcome for their child. Some parents struggle, however, to gain access to respite services or short breaks, finding thresholds too high within the services for children with disabilities.
57. It is evident that the local authority is appropriately intervening to protect some children who have experienced serial or chronic poor parenting that has been harmful, although it is recognised that some children in care for shorter periods do have too many placement changes prior to returning to the community. Further efforts are also needed in preparing and supporting young people for adult life, through the development of the necessary skills towards independence or semi-independence. Commencing transition planning at an earlier stage for those with enduring, complex needs is recognised as necessary. The local authority is clear that financial savings can be made without impacting adversely on the care received by children and some improvements have recently been achieved within the financial capacity of budget allocations, for example in raising fostering fees and leaving care grants.

## **Areas for improvement**

58. In order to improve the quality of provision and services for looked after children and young people in the London Borough of Southwark, the local authority and its partners should take the following action.

### **Immediately:**

- ensure that clearly recorded care plans are in place for looked after children and care leavers containing clear, specific outcomes sought as well as realistic contingency plans.

**Within three months:**

- ensure that assessments are comprehensive and up to date and that they take account of the full circumstances of the child in need plans and interventions.
- ensure that transition to independence is effectively planned, commencing at an appropriate stage for young people, leading to the development of and support for independence skills
- develop a systemic evaluation of services for children and young people and their families on the edge of care to assess their effectiveness and ensure a robust monitoring of these children leading to timely decision making should they need to become looked after
- ensure an effective dialogue with the family courts aimed at establishing a mutual clear understanding of thresholds, quality of plans and proposals, and timescales for completion within a timeframe suitable for each child
- ensure capacity of the independent visiting service is sufficient to meet need.

**Within six months:**

- Southwark NHS Primary Care Trust and the local authority to ensure that young people's health needs are fully addressed in preparation for leaving care, including the consistent provision of summary health plans
- ensure that themes identified within case audits are collated, leading to clear action plans and that consequent outcomes are systematically and consistently evaluated to achieve a full understanding of their service impact.



## How good are outcomes for looked after children and care leavers?

### Being healthy

### Grade 2 (Good)

59. Good arrangements are in place to assess and maintain the health of looked after children and young people. Arrangements for designated professionals are mostly good and they provide effective leadership across the area. However, the limited time allocated to the designated doctor role presents challenges in discharging continuously its full range of strategic and operational responsibilities. Initial health assessments are carried out in a sufficiently timely way by appropriately qualified medical practitioners, and are of good quality. Improvements in performance have taken place with health assessments now at 90%, with even better rates for those looked after for more than one year (93%). Inconsistent practice between medical practitioners carrying out subsequent review assessments can impact adversely on their quality.
60. Good progress is being made in ensuring health needs are met while children are looked after. There is an effective use of audit as a quality assurance and monitoring mechanism. This has identified areas for more efficient working practices and improved communications within the health community. Good arrangements are in place to ensure that the health needs of those children placed out of borough are also fully addressed. Sunshine House is a highly valued children's health and development resource offering integrated community health and social care services, with a particular focus on children with a disability and those with additional vulnerabilities. There are very good and highly effective arrangements to meet the emotional health needs of most looked after children and young people through the looked after CAMHS provision. The strengths and difficulties questionnaire is used effectively on an individual basis as well as in informing service improvement. The needs of young mothers are recognised and they can access help from the teenage pregnancy midwife or the family nurse partnership. Foster carers also receive very good support, including training and advice, from health practitioners. There are, however, insufficient arrangements to provide older young people with a summary of their healthcare when they leave care.

### Staying safe

### Grade 2 (Good)

61. Safeguarding arrangements for looked after children are good. Pre-birth work is of a high quality, with risk well recognised, leading to appropriate and timely action. This development is part of a concerted and assertive response by the local authority whereby some children had previously not entered care at a sufficiently early point in response to the harm they had experienced. Most looked after children live in stable and high quality

placements. The work to ensure that children and young people have long-term stable placements is excellent. The vast majority of children who responded to the survey or who were met by inspectors stated that their placement was good or very good. There has been effective action taken since the Joint Area Review which has led to enhanced support to children in their placements. The number of unplanned placement moves has reduced and the proportion of children who have three or more placement moves is less than the national average. There is evidence that some children experience instability at the beginning of their care experience, but once children are transferred to the looked after children teams they experience stable relationships with their social workers and within their placements.

62. The vast majority of children who responded to the Ofsted survey stated that they felt safe or very safe; however a significant minority felt it varied or they felt unsafe. These were all older children or young adults and many adverse comments referred to the area in which they live. The vast majority of children stated that there was at least one person that they could talk to if they felt unsafe. Parents spoken to during the inspection were all positive about the service they were currently receiving from children's services.
63. Commissioning arrangements ensure that there are effective safeguarding standards in place for all services commissioned and have led to improving local placement choice. A higher proportion of children are placed within 20 miles of their home than similar authorities which is good. Ofsted's recent inspections of the local authority fostering service and its adoption services rated both as good. A very strong focus on permanency planning is in place with robust systems for tracking children to ensure that any drift is identified at an early stage for young children which is then effectively challenged. The proportion of children adopted, while increasing, remains lower than similar areas. However, there have been significant numbers of children achieving permanence through special guardianship orders.

### **Enjoying and achieving**

### **Grade 2 (Good)**

64. Outcomes for looked after children and young people to enjoy and achieve are good. A strong commitment is shown by the SCFT to ensuring children's life chances are enhanced through their educational achievement and attainment. This is a priority within both the Council Plan and Children and Young People's Plan. The looked after children education team reports regularly to Corporate Parenting Committee. Most children and young people that responded to the survey for this inspection feel the education they get is good or very good and that they are receiving the help they need with their education. There are appropriately focused priorities for the restructured education team which is enhancing existing data to ensure more systematic tracking and monitoring of children's

attainment, progress and attendance. This is driving the current targeted work with those 20 children with the greatest attainment gap.

65. The looked after children education service makes an effective contribution, within a strong multi-agency approach, to maintaining educational stability, ensuring children and young people are placed in the most suitable provision. The large majority of children are in provision that has been judged by Ofsted to be at least good. Effective work with schools is taking place to ensure provision is meeting children's needs, with appropriately tailored packages of additional support, including individual tuition. The effective use and impact of the pupil premium is being closely monitored. The looked after children's education team attend all first personal education plan (PEP) meetings, attending subsequent meetings if there are concerns. Almost all children and young people have a PEP and timeliness has improved recently, although the quality of these is acknowledged to be variable. This is being addressed through auditing and ongoing support for social workers, carers and new designated teachers.
66. A strong 'team around the child' approach has ensured that children at risk of exclusion are robustly protected and there have been no permanent exclusions of looked after children in the academic year 2010/2011. Schools report a good level of challenge from children's services regarding fixed term exclusion and local data shows the number of children experiencing multiple fixed term exclusions is reducing year on year. Work continues to improve attendance rates through increasingly systematic and complete monitoring.
67. The proportion of looked after young people that achieved five good GCSEs including English and mathematics in 2011 was well above both similar areas and national averages, representing a narrowing of the gap. Results at Key Stage 2 are more variable, with a very small number taking tests. Results in English dipped but those achieving Level 4 or above in mathematics improved and the authority saw its best ever results in this subject. At the end of statutory schooling, a higher proportion of young people than in similar areas and nationally continue in full time education. Care leavers who wish to attend university are well supported with over 50 young people currently attending. Children have good access to a wide range of out of school activities, although this is not always recorded in plans. Southwark's fostering service has protected funding to provide looked after children with music and sport activities and older children and young people have free entry to the borough's leisure centres.

**Making a positive contribution, including user engagement**  
**Grade 1 (Outstanding)**

68. Arrangements for looked after children and young people to make a positive contribution are outstanding. Corporate parents and senior

managers demonstrate high levels of commitment to ensuring the voice of children and young people is not only heard but has high impact. Speaker Box has made a significant contribution to service development through contributing, for example, to the review of allowances and the leaving care grant, as well as the design of facilities for older looked after children and care leavers at Talfourd Place. Members have also delivered a range of training and have hosted conferences, including the annual safeguarding conference. It is well supported and representative young people meet with elected members, team managers and senior managers regularly. They work hard to ensure that all looked after children and young people are included, including younger children and those with disabilities, for example through the high quality quarterly magazine, regular consultation events and a 'big picnic'. There are high ambitions to extend its reach even further. The pledge to looked after children takes the form of 'ten golden rules' and social workers are held to account if these are not kept. Young people celebrate the work of professionals and carers through a monthly 'extra mile' award.

69. The council has a well established and effective complaints procedure. Most are resolved in a timely way at local level. There is evidence that the outcomes of complaints have been used to improve services and practice, for example, a review of semi-independent living. The independent advocacy service (VOICE), for those in, and leaving care, is effective. It is actively promoted, supporting those living in and outside the borough. The council provides a successful independent visitor service to 30 children and young people through community service volunteers (CSV), but there is insufficient capacity resulting in some young people waiting for the service. Systems have been introduced to ensure improved joint working and communication between the youth offending service and children's social care. Local data demonstrates the effectiveness of this with a reduction in the proportion of looked after children entering the youth justice system for the first time.

### **Economic well-being**

### **Grade 3 (Adequate)**

70. Looked after children and young people's economic well-being outcomes are adequate. The Children and Young People's Plan and Corporate Parenting Committee identify this as a priority area for development. Almost all young people are living in suitable accommodation with bed and breakfast provision never used. Strong partnerships with housing are well established ensuring priority for care leavers through Supporting People arrangements and providing secure tenancies for care leavers. A large majority of responses to the inspection survey show that care leavers live in good or very good accommodation. However, almost one third do not feel they are living in the right place and care leavers who spoke to inspectors had very variable views on the suitability of their accommodation.

71. Monitoring of those young people at risk of disengagement in Years 10 and 11 is tracked with action plans put in place to ensure they have a destination at the end of statutory schooling. A broad range of support is available from personal and specialist advisers and social workers to encourage young people into education, training and employment (ETE). The proportion of care leavers engaged in ETE is in line with the national average and slightly below similar areas. Work continues with local providers to ensure the wide range of care leavers' needs can be met, for example, a post-16 specialist centre for looked after young people with dyslexia has been opened at the local college in partnership with the council.
72. Of the care leavers surveyed, less than half felt they had enough help to prepare for leaving care. Pathway planning is improving, although practitioners are spending more time focusing on addressing immediate expressed needs, and proportionately less implementing the overall plan. However, there are good, supportive opportunities for care leavers to take up apprenticeships, and a local authority target of 20% of apprenticeships being offered to care leavers has been achieved in each of the last four years. Six young people are currently in a pre-apprenticeship scheme, which is effective in helping care leavers transfer life experiences into employable skills. Eight young people are also matched to professionals within the council through a coaching scheme.
73. A life skills programme is being reintroduced, following previous poor attendance with plans to commence preparation earlier, but it is as yet too early to see firm outcomes. A drop-in centre for those that do not feel able to access group work has been used by 142 young people in the first six months of operation. Some good examples of positive and celebratory images and other materials promoting the strengths in the diversity of cultures in the area were evident within the centre frequented by care leavers. The local authority also identifies the need to train foster carers to prepare young people for leaving care. Speaker Box also recently identified a need for more consistent and effective relationships between young people, social workers and personal advisors. An outcome of this is additional training to social workers and personal advisors on building positive and trusting relationships with children and young people.

## Quality of provision

## Grade 2 (Good)

74. The quality of provision for children and young people in Southwark is good. There is a good range of services for children and young people on the edge of care, offering effective interventions for a significant number of families which have led to improved outcomes. Good strategic management has led to services being placed under a single management structure, being imminently enhanced by the addition of a family therapy team. The service is now identifying families who need these services at an earlier stage. There is highly regarded parenting service which delivers

good quality group programmes and individual parenting programmes within the home environment. A more systematic and comprehensive approach to evaluation of the impact of these services is yet to be implemented, and in some cases interventions have not been effective due to services not intervening at an early enough stage or the most appropriate service not being put in place. Parents met during the inspection confirmed this but were overwhelmingly positive about the service, with almost all identifying improved parenting skills, relationships with their children and outcomes for their children. An effective intensive family intervention service is able to intervene with families over longer periods, while another good service undertakes shorter term work with families and teenagers (ACT). A resource panel is leading to quality and timeliness of decision making for children and young people on the edge of care.

75. Children whose needs are assessed as needing to be addressed through family court proceedings have clear, robust and appropriate assessments and realistic, proposed plans in place. A strong legal team offers good advice to social work teams. However, there are some significant differences between the courts and children's services, and there has not been an overall review of cases where applications were unsuccessful. A good level of support, intervention and monitoring is put in place where children have been placed with family members. Overall, assessments are analytical and effectively identify risks and protective factors, but up to date comprehensive assessments are not consistently in place for some children. The absence of a clearly recorded care plan with intended outcomes hinders the effective tracking of the plan. Improved monitoring of permanency plans enables potential drift to be challenged at an early stage.
76. Children and young people are seen regularly by their social workers and children report very positive relationships with them, however social workers do not always see children alone where it is appropriate and some teenagers do not feel that social workers spend sufficient time with them. There are examples of effective engagement in activities with children in order to build relationships. Direct work is given a very high profile. Overall the quality of direct work with children is good and child centred, there is evidence of very sensitive and considered interventions with children. The quality of work with teenagers is more variable. In a few cases it is not evident that the full knowledge of the young person is used to build effective relationships. Skilled and experienced staff deliver a good service to unaccompanied asylum seeking children, including good access to interpreters. Work is culturally sensitive and unaccompanied asylum seeking children have access to relevant community groups. There are some very good examples of identity, culture, ethnicity, and religion being considered in planning and intervention. However, this is not consistent with some assessments being superficial not always recognising the impact on case planning and intervention.

77. Social workers know their looked after children well many of whom experience good stable relationships. Some examples of very good work with teenagers were seen demonstrating a strong commitment and perseverance from professionals. There is a strong commitment to enabling children and young people to live in foster placements with the 'staying put' initiative being effective in enabling young people leaving care to remain in their same placement. A good in house fostering service, combined with good commissioning of independent providers means that children are in high quality placements. Support for children in placement is very strong. High quality services such as Carelink and educational support combined with good access to leisure opportunities enable a high level of stability. The good adoption service uses learning from the small number of disruptions to improve the service. Good adoption support is in place although it currently has capacity difficulties.
78. Overall, case recording is reasonably current, with detailed observations of children; however there is evidence of delays in recording some visits. The electronic recording system is slow, not easy to navigate and time consuming. Social work review reports vary in quality as do some of the actions resulting from reviews of care plans. Reviews are timely, with examples seen of reviewing officers providing effective challenge in reviews. However, reviewing officers are not always effective in tracking cases and some reviews did not show a sufficiently holistic understanding of the child's circumstances. Views of children are effectively taken into account within reviews and reviews are child centred.

### **Ambition and prioritisation**

### **Grade 1 (Outstanding)**

79. Ambition and prioritisation for looked after children and young people are outstanding. The local authority and partners demonstrate the highest level of commitment and determination to deliver outcomes for looked after children which are at least as good as those for other children. Senior managers, elected members and front line staff met during the inspection were passionate about delivering highly effective services to children in care and care leavers. The corporate parenting arrangements are fully integrated into the children's partnership and ensure effective prioritising of children in care and care leavers who receive a very high profile within the partnership, including with elected members.
80. Regular and thorough performance information and evaluation is provided to all levels of management and to elected members. This, combined with listening to children, leads to good knowledge of the service and supports strong ambition and effective prioritisation. The strong prioritisation is demonstrated through the development of the excellent facility for children in care and care leavers and an increasing co-location of professionals, further strengthening partnership arrangements and enabling young people to have a more seamless service. An excellent example of the impact of prioritisation is the improvements in the stability

that children experience who are in long term placements. The development of innovative services for children is reflected through developments for children on the edge of care and the development of the family drug and alcohol court shared by several London Boroughs. The council ensures that care leavers have good access to a range of apprenticeships within the council, although it recognises there is work to be done in supporting care leavers further in their preparation for adulthood.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 2 (Good)**

81. Leadership and management for looked after children in Southwark are good. The council has effective arrangements for commissioning and procuring services, based on a good analysis of current and forthcoming need. However, there remains higher than expected numbers of children entering and ceasing being looked after for short periods, indicating further improvements are needed for those on the cusp of coming into care. All children are placed in provision that is good or better. Children are routinely consulted to shape commissioning decisions and are involved in selection panels and interviews in the tendering process and are being developed as young inspectors. The experience of the child is at the centre of monitoring arrangements. In order to meet particular needs the council has worked with providers to develop specialist services, for example foster care placements for young people involved in gangs. The council is working with London Care Services towards developing a regional procurement framework. The assessment of the sufficiency of placements is good and this has led to a decision to develop more in-house foster care. Financial plans are in place, and it is recognised that further efficiencies can yet be achieved in procuring more cost effective provision.
82. A placement panel both assesses the impact of individual placements on outcomes for children and informs further commissioning. Providers are very positive about the service delivered by the partnership to children and young people. The culturally diverse needs of children and young people inform commissioning and a bi-annual placement panel requires social workers to evidence that any diversity needs and educational outcomes are being met. Social care has achieved and is sustaining front line stability of the social work workforce with a virtually full, permanent qualified social work establishment with social workers having manageable caseloads. Good support is in place for newly qualified social workers. The quality and access to training is good, with particularly good access to training to develop direct work skills with children. Morale is high and staff are demonstrably committed to high standards and good outcomes.



## Performance management and quality assurance

### Grade 2 (Good)

83. Performance management and quality assurance arrangements for looked after children are good. Quality assurance and audit activity are well established in practice. There is increasing evidence of a very good understanding of the story behind the data, for example in the extensive work undertaken to understand the factors impacting on stability of placements have led to robust and effective action. A significant strength of quality assurance processes is the involvement of children and young people in evaluating services. There are good examples of thematic audits which have led to an increased understanding of the service. A move towards more outcome focused measures is yet to be fully achieved and themes from case audits are not effectively drawn together to achieve learning or the impact of changes made. A comprehensive and systematic evaluation of services for children on the edge of care is now being developed but is yet to be completed.
84. Management oversight is regular and supervision is highly valued by staff who state that managers are accessible and they feel well supported. Management oversight in most cases is clear and effective. However, in some cases actions are not always sufficiently tracked by managers with the experience of the child not always sufficiently taken into account. In some cases this led to an overly optimistic view of the likely success of interventions. Increasingly robust and extensive data and other performance monitoring materials are in place and developing further, although sufficiently bespoke performance management and quality assurance information are recognised as being less well evidenced.

## Record of main findings:

<b>Safeguarding services</b>	
Overall effectiveness	Good
Capacity for improvement	Outstanding
<b>Safeguarding outcomes for children and young people</b>	
Children and young people are safe and feel safe	Good
Quality of provision	Good
The contribution of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe	Good
<b>Services for looked after children</b>	
Ambition and prioritisation	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Performance management and quality assurance	Good
Partnership working	Good
Equality and diversity	Good
<b>Services for looked after children</b>	
Overall effectiveness	Good
Capacity for improvement	Good
<b>How good are outcomes for looked after children and care leavers?</b>	
Being healthy	Good
Staying safe	Good
Enjoying and achieving	Good
Making a positive contribution, including user engagement	Outstanding
Economic well-being	Adequate
Quality of provision	Good
<b>Services for looked after children</b>	
Ambition and prioritisation	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Performance management and quality assurance	Good
Equality and diversity	Good

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 12 September 2012	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Southwark Schools for the Future: New School Rotherhithe, Compass and Southwark Free School	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Project Director, Southwark Schools for the Future	

### RECOMMENDATION

1. That Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee note the briefing provided below.

### UPDATE

#### Compass

2. Compass School have yet to identify a site and this non-identification of a site, both permanent and temporary, is a significant risk to the school opening as proposed in September 2013.

#### University Technical College (UTC)

3. The DfE has approved the deferral of the opening of the UTC to September 2013. This date is now unlikely to be achievable and there is significant uncertainty associated with the project as a result of the proposed merger of Lewisham and Southwark College and the potential for this to result in the non-availability of the site or the necessary ancillary facilities for the UTC on the College's Bermondsey site.

#### Southwark Free School

4. In 2011 Southwark Free School (SFS) secured Department for Education pre-opening approval to open in September 2012. At the time of this approval the school was proposed to be established at a site in Great Dover Street.
5. In March 2012 SFS initiated a public consultation process seeking feedback from local stakeholders in regard to proposals to establish a 420 place primary school at 399 Rotherhithe New Road.
6. The school has now been granted a 2 year lease from the Council for the Ledbury Estate Tenant's Hall to enable their establishment.
7. The school's permanent proposals for 399 Rotherhithe New Road are currently the subject of pre-application discussions with Southwark planners.

**AUDIT TRAIL**

<b>Report Author</b>	Sam Fowler	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	4 September 2012	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Scrutiny Team</b>	4 September 2012	

## Education, Children's Services & Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee

### Work Programme 2012/13

#### Set piece interviews

Safeguarding – annual report and interview of Independent chair - April

#### Cabinet member interviews:

Cllr Veronica Ward : Olympics and Leisure – 12 September

Cllr Dora Dixon-Fyle : Children – 12 March

#### Cabinet member invited to participate:

Cllr Claire Hickson : November

- Adult Education (invite officers, SSAL, and other service users)
- Economic development & young people , see below presentation and report request \*-

#### Regular items

Rotherhithe School and Southwark Free Schools – update reports each meeting

Twice yearly attendance at November and March by Southwark Youth Council & Speakerbox and review of Children's and Young People's Plan (CYPP )  
( coinciding with cabinet members attendance/ interviews with Cllr Hickson and Cllr Dixon-Fyle )

Monitoring of cabinet members reports in response to reviews ; Obesity and Sports Provision ( February ) and Support for parents and carers of disabled children and young people ( November)

#### Presentations and reports

Olympics - measuring the impact. (September )

Swimming pools - is our provision efficient and meeting community needs. (September)

\*The work of the council in supporting young people transition from school to collage and work. How do we promote and support young people to access jobs, training and work qualifications. (November)

Supporting parents in challenging situations: update report on the work being done by CSV to support parents (January)

Learning and improvement in local safeguarding  
Safeguarding report (September )

Update on Domestic Abuse including cabinet response to the scrutiny report produced by Housing, Environment, Transport & Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee (January )

### **Reviews**

Review of universal Free Healthy School Meals

Bullying - school and council policy in supporting vulnerable children and reducing abusive and poor peer relations.

Request introductory report form officers (September)

The council's role with maintained , academy and free schools - exploring what our governance and influencing levers are in a changing context, and how the council can promote good performance, and tackle poor performance.

Request introductory report form officers ( September )

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**EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S SERVICES & LEISURE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE  
MUNICIPAL YEAR 2012-13**

**AGENDA DISTRIBUTION LIST (OPEN)**

**NOTE:** Original held by Scrutiny Team; all amendments/queries to Julie Timbrell Tel: 020 7525 0514

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Revd Nicholas Elder	1	<b>External</b>	
Colin Elliott	1	Local History Library	1
Leticia Ojeda	1		
Lynn Charlton	1		
<b>Other Members</b>			
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle	1		
Councillor Catherine Bowman	1		
		<b>Total:</b>	42
		<b>Dated:</b> July 2012	